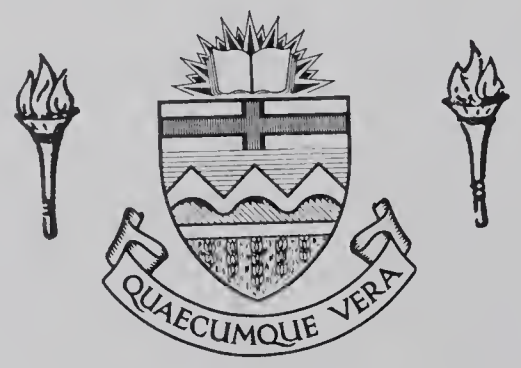
For Reference

NOT TO BE TAKEN FROM THIS ROOM

For Reference

NOT TO BE TAKEN FROM THIS ROOM

Ex LIBRIS
UNIVERSITATIS
ALBERTAENSIS



University of Alberta
Printing Department

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2019 with funding from
University of Alberta Libraries

https://archive.org/details/Thompson1966

ANCIENT HERESIES

AND

MODERN DEVIATIONS

FROM THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE GENERAL FACULTY
COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON BACHELOR OF
DIVINITY DEGREES IN CANDIDACY FOR
THE DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF DIVINITY

BY

Rev. Robert James Thompson B.A.

The University of Alberta

April 1966.

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

ST. STEPHEN'S THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE

We, the undersigned, hereby certify that we have read and recommend to the General Faculty Council for acceptance, a thesis entitled "ANCIENT HERESIES AND MODERN DEVIATIONS FROM THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH" submitted by Robert James Thompson B.A. in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Divinity.

ANCIENT HERESIES

AND

MODERN DEVIATIONS

FROM THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

by

Rev. Robert James Thompson B.A.

St. Stephen's Theological College
The University of Alberta.
April 1966.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Title: "Ancient Heresies and Modern Deviations From The Christian Church"

	Page
Section I "Prolegomena"	7
Introduction	8
(a) Definitions	9
(b) The Christian Norm	11
(c) "Modus Operandi"	12
Section II "Ancient Heresies"	
Chapter 1 Judaistic Heresies	
(a) Beginnings	15
(b) Increased Activity	17
(c) Montanism	20
(d) Other Heresies	23
Chapter 2 Gnostic Heresies	
(a) The Docetics	28
(b) Eclectic-gnosticism	29
(c) Marcionism	30
Chapter 3 Other Heretical Developments	
(a) Manichaeans	34
(b) The Arian Controversy	35
(c) Theodore of Mopsuestia	37
(d) Nestorius	38
(e) The Pelagian Controversy	39
Section III "Heresies and Heretics" (Chalcedon - 1800 A.D.)	
Chapter 4 The Medieval Period (451 A.D. - Reformation)	
(a) Bogomils	42
(b) Cathars	44
(c) Amaurians	45
(d) Peter Abelard and Peter Waldo	46
(e) Others: Wyclif, Huss, Joan of Arc	48
Chapter 5 The Reformation to 1800	
(a) Further Developments: Luther, Zwingli, Anabaptists, Calvin, Servetus, Quakers, Rationalism, Universalism.	52

TABLE OF CONTENTS (continued...)

		Page
Section IV "Modern Deviations"		
Chapter 6 The Judaistic Type		
(a)	Seventh Day Adventists	59
(b)	Jehovah's Witnesses	63
(c)	Latter Day Saints (Mormon)	69
Chapter 7 The Gnostic Type		
(a)	Theosophy and Spiritism	77
(b)	Christian Science	79
(c)	Moral Re-Armament (MRA)	85
(d)	Unitarians	91
Section V "Comparisons and Conclusions"		
Chapter 8 Heresies Unchanged		
(a)	Credit for Sincerity	95
(b)	Difficulty of Classification (Some Possibilities)	95
(c)	One possible reaction to the problem	97
(d)	Characteristics	98
(e)	Conclusion	104

SECTION I

"PROLEGOMENA"

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this opening section is threefold. Before an accurate and meaningful analysis of any subject can be made, it is necessary to set out as clearly as possible our intentions and our tools. Inevitably, one enters into such a discussion as "heresies" with personal bias, resulting from background and conviction. As no one can claim possession of infallible truth, but rather only of conviction through faith and study, we must admit from the beginning the reasons for our points of reference. What is heresy? Who are the religious deviates? Only God really knows.

However, to carry such reasoning to its final conclusion could lead one to say that there is little use in searching for truth when what is found can be only relative truth, that is, truth that is determined by one's own religious beliefs. So it is that right or wrong as they may be, our terms of reference are the focal point upon which hinge the validity, if not the correctness, of our observations and conclusions.

It is therefore in order that a set of definitions be set down, from which the writer may draw his conclusions, and from which the reader may judge these conclusions. The purpose of this paper is to ascertain what comparisons, if any, can be made between "ancient heresies", i.e. some of those Christian heresies that appeared from the inception of the Christian Church until the Council of Chalcedon and "modern deviations", i.e. some that have appeared since 1800. In order to make comparisions and to draw conclusions, some norm

must be set forth.

It would be erroneous to imply that the only deviations worth considering are those falling before Chalcedon or after 1800. For this reason a bridge section will be included which will deal with the developments between these two major eras to be studied.

It is the feeling of this writer that certain basic patterns emerge in the deviations to be discussed and that a number of similarities can be readily seen between heresies of the past and deviations of the present.

(a) Definitions

Heresy A dictionary definition of this word reads as follows: "a belief different from the accepted belief of a church, school or profession" For our purposes here this is not really a sufficient definition. Horton Davies, in his book Christian Deviations, defines a heresy as a belief that differs from that accepted by the great historic Communions of Christendom. In speaking of his own book he says:

> "Although this brief study in distortion of Christianity is entitled Christian Deviations, it does not follow that all the religious communities encountered are equally far 'from the centre'. The reader may fairly ask the author to define what he means by 'the center'. By this conception is intended the great historic Communions of Christendom, which accept the Lordship of Jesus Christ as recorded in the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments and to which the Creeds bear witness. These, with the outstanding exception of the Roman Catholic Church, have associated themselves in the World Council of Churches." [2]

For our purposes, then, a heresy is that which deviates from what we view as the Christian Centre, and our definition of the Christian Centre shall be basically that outlined in the above quotation.

Another writer, Dr. R. M. Jones, speaks of it in a similar manner:

> "But when does the term 'heretic' rightly apply? When does a man cease to be counted safe and become a dangerous heretical adventurer? Not, of course, until certain truths have been accepted as sacred and have won a group of adherents who believe them to be both true and essential to life and salvation. There must be a conscious and intense orthodoxy in the field before there can be a standard that can be used to differentiate and determine heresy. Heresy is positive deviation within the fold from an established, or at least an accepted, set of doctrines or body of ideas. Doubt, scepticism, infidelity, are not heresy. They are indications of drift and uncertainty, and, perhaps, of the disintegration of faith, but they are too weak and negative to be called heresy. Heresy proclaims something to be true and important. It announces a way. It asserts a fiery positive. It has the emphasis of infallibility no less than orthodoxy has. The point of importance is that it challenges the ideas of orthodoxy and insists that something else is more true and closer to the eternal nature of things ."[3]

Basically then, the ideas expressed by both of the above quoted authors will be the framework of our definition of "heresy".

Deviation We use this word due to the fact that it has become socially and ecclesiastically unacceptable in this Twentieth Century to call anyone a heretic. In the world of sociological and psychological terminology, the word "heretic" has fallen into disuse and has been replaced by a term which, in this writer's opinion, has the same meaning. It now appears more acceptable to call an individual or group which strays from

the Christian Centre a "religious deviate" or "religious deviation". Whether the reason for this is that we are less sure of our own ground or simply less dogmatic remains to be seen. However, for the purposes of this paper, "ancient heresy" and "modern deviation" shall have the same meaning except as regards to time in history. It will be readily apparent that such a differentiation is extremely arbitrary, yet made necessary by the age in which we live.

(b) The Christian Norm

Again admitting the elusiveness of such a definition, let us recall Horton Davies' words once more, i.e. the beliefs of the "great historic Communions of Christendom", which, with the exception of the Roman Catholic Church, have become associated with the World Council of Churches. Basically this will be our point of reference and yet there will no doubt be individual facets introduced by this writer, as a result of "United Church" background, theological training and perhaps even the Methodist and Presbyterian background of my family.

Steven Runciman speaks to the problem of setting the "Christian Norm" when he says,

> "Still more than the unbeliever it is the wrong believer, the heretic rather than the Infidel, whose conversion is the concern of the faithful. For the infidel is often impossible to win. No one can prove that Christianity is better than Buddhism or Islam. Those who believe it to be so, do so not from logical argument but from an instinctive conviction that its fundamental message is the true revelation, whereas those of other creeds are false or unimportant. But the heretic Christian is in a different position. He believes, like the orthodox, in the basic article of the

> Christian faith, that Jesus of Nazareth died to redeem us. But he gives his faith another interpretation, that leads him, in orthodox eyes, into dangerous and avoidable error.
>
> His crime is therefore more serious. The infidel in his unbelief leaves Christianity alone. The heretic accepts its principles but by perverting them destroys their value, undermining the whole Christian position. Yet heresy is hard to exterminate. 'For there must be also heresies among you', said St. Paul (I Cor. 11:19),and indeed orthodox doctrine is complex and difficult, and it is tempting to make some simplification here or there - tempting, but not to be endured ... The Church was narrow minded because the true path is narrow, and it knew that for Christians no other path led to salvation". 4

(c) "Modus Operandi"

The general method of operation to be used in this paper is outlined in the Table of Contents. Sections II, III, and IV will be devoted to a description of the developments in religious thought among those groups who received and are receiving the label "heretics" or "deviationists". Due to the immensity of such a task and the variety of deviations, it is impossible to deal in depth with all such deviations. Those selected are those which seem to me to exemplify certain patterns of their period. Upon the subject of each of these heresies, numerous books have been written and readers of this paper are encouraged to make full use of the references listed herein.

The concluding section has been devoted to comparisons and conclusions of ancient heresies and modern deviations. Such comparisons, it will be recognized, may include a good deal of subjective opinion which seems inevitable, and not necessarily undesirable or needing apology, as long as it is recognized as such.

References:

1. "Thorndike - Barnhart Dictionary"
Scott, Foresman and Company - Chicago 1952

2. "Christian Deviations"- Horton Davies
S.C.M. Press - Amsterdam 1961
Page 8

3. "The Church's Debt to Heretics"- R. M. Jones
James Clarke and Co. - London 1924
Page 12

4. "The Medieval Manichee"- Steven Runciman
Viking Press - New York 1961
Page 1

Section II

"ANCIENT HERESIES"

(Pentecost to Chalcedon)

Chapter One "Judaistic Heresies"

The term "Judaistic Heresies", refers to groups or individuals who accept only certain parts of the religion of their fathers and the Christian Gospel, i.e. those which fit their personal demands regarding religion. These heresies are eclectic in so far as they take from both the Jewish and Christian faiths those things that appeal, rejecting those facets which are difficult or incompatible with their thinking. This sort of creeping, yet limited, eclecticism has been with the Church since the days of her beginnings. As this paper is to be a survey of some, rather than a history of all heresies, certain examples have been chosen to illustrate the "Judaistic" type of heresy during the first 450 years of Church History.

(a) Beginnings

In the second chapter of Paul's letter to Colossae we read these words:

> "See to it that no one makes a prey of you by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the universe, and not according to Christ. For in him the whole fulness of the deity dwells bodily, and you have come to fulness of life in him, who is the head of all rule and authority. In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of flesh in the circumcision of Christ...And you who were dead in trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, having cancelled the bond which stood against us with its legal demands; this he set aside nailing it to the Cross... Therefore let no one pass judgement on you in questions of food and drink or with regard to a

> festival or a new moon or a sabbath...Why do you submit to regulations, "Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch..."

It would seem that Paul was writing to a very definite situation where certain individuals at Colossae were attempting to persuade the Christian community that it was important for them to retain the legalistic regulations of Judaism as well as accepting the faith of Christ. These are possibly the earliest of the Judaising heretics and what they promoted was "neither a religion of the Torah or a religion of the Gospel".[2] The doctrine of these heretics was a mythical one, including a wide range of spirits, demons and angels, referring to unseen worlds and an intensely holy life in this world. From Judaism they obtained names, fast days, rituals, food laws and abstinences; from Christianity they formed deep mystery and hidden glories known only to the elect. Dr. F.J.A. Hort in discussing the Judaising activities at Colossae says:

> "But the contrast in tone between the two Epistles (Colossians and Romans) is most interesting and instructive. To the Romans St. Paul pleads for tolerance and gentleness towards the 'weak ones' as he calls them, who conscientiously clung to the differences of food and days. At Colossae it was no question of retaining customs, but of introducing new practices among people who had originally received a purer faith, such practices moreover being valued for the sake of a false principle to say nothing of being associated with angel-worship which dishonored the Lord Himself...There is much for tracing the teaching condemned by St. Paul at Colossae to Essene influences." [3]

Yet even this theory, says Hort, must be somewhat tempered due to the lack of tangible evidence of Essenism out of Palestine.

Although the definite suggestion is there, we would have to know more about the Judaism of the Dispersion to be more certain. There is also the suggestion of "magic" which was common to the area and "Greek wisdom" which would have influcenced any Jews of the dispersion taking up residence here.

It must suffice, then, for us to say that the Judaizers of Colossae, and their heresy which Paul condemned, had the flavor of Essene influnece and also the influence of both local and classical Greek culture. It was a heretical group by the simple fact of adding and subtracting from the Christian gospel as it saw fit to do.

(b) Increased Activity

A group known as Simonians sprang up in Samaria about 50 A. D., spread throughout many parts of the Christian world and eventually even claimed a small following in Rome. Simon of Gitta, the founder and principal of the heresy, claimed that he was the deity and father of the Jews. Basically hostile to traditional Judaism and the Torah, Simon and his followers created and cultivated a religion of magic and sexual mysticism, filled with half-truths concerning both Judaism and Christianity.

Justin and Irenaeus, in their writings, both strongly refuted the claims and doctrines of this group. Although its continuing influence was not strong, Simon's followers continued for some time to follow his teachings and practice.

Another group also classifiable with the Judaizers, although often seen for their Gnostic tendencies as well, are the Ebionites connected with one Cerinthus. Here also, little first hand information is available, and most of our knowledge about them comes from refutations written by early church fathers. Irenaeus writes of the group late in the first century:

> "A certain Cerinthus also in Asia taught that the world was not made by the first God, but by a certain Virtue far separated and removed from the Principality which is above all things, a Virtue which knows not, the God over all. He added that Jesus was not born of a virgin, but was the son of Joseph and Mary, like other men, but superior to all others in justice, prudence, and wisdom. And that after his baptism Christ descended upon him in the form of a dove, from that Principality which is above all things; and that then he revealed the Unknown Father and performed deeds of virtue, but that in the end Christ flew back, leaving Jesus, and Jesus suffered and rose again, but Christ remained impassible, being by nature spiritual..."
> "...2.Those who are called Ebionites...use only the Gospel according to Matthew; they reject the Apostle Paul, calling him an apostate from the law. The prophetic writings, they strive to expound with especial exactness; they are circumcised and persevere in the customs according to the Law, and in the Jewish mode of life, even to the extent of worshipping Jerusalem, as if it were the abode of God..."4

Carrington, in The Early Christian Church, makes this comment about Judaistic Heresies:

> "...a list of seven sects into which the Jews were divided;...enumerates the Essenes, the Galileans, the Daily Baptists, the Masbothaeans, in addition to the Samaritans, Pharisees and Sadducees...similar sects soon appeared among the Jewish Christians under the influence of such men as Simon, Dositheus, Cleobius,... mere names to us; but there is no doubt that Jewish heresy...made headway in the church very fast; they had points of contact with the religions of Syria, Iran and possibly India as well ." 5

By the time of Origen, it would seem that the general interpretation of the Ebionites is that they are split into two groups, one of which holds that Jesus was the natural son of Joseph and Mary, the other holding the doctrine of the Virgin Birth. In the fourth century the picture becomes still more clouded when Epiphanius refers to two separate groups and calls them Ebionaeans and Nazaraeans. Although the Christological difference made a distinction between Ebionites, that there were two separate communities is regarded by historians as being unlikely. Some of this group did however work out a fairly systematic doctrine and have been given the name "Essene Ebionites".

The foregoing paragraph helps us to understand the very complex nature of even one of the "ancient heresies". This of course makes most difficult any real attempt to categorize them accurately and completely as to origin, founder, tradition and doctrine. It would seem that there were indeed heresies within heresies, and for our purposes here we must satisfy ourselves with general impressions and doctrinal tendencies.

Dr. F. Hort draws the following conclusions:

> "The much debated question of the date and origin of the Essene form of Ebionism, that of the Clementines, cannot be properly examined except in connexion with a minute study partly of the extant literature, and still more of the quotations and references in the Fathers. There is, as far as I can see, nothing whatever to connect it with the apostolic age or even the greater part of the second century...This literature seems to have proceeded from some great revival among the Ebionites of Eastern Palestine, and its marvellous energy sufficiently attests the force of the movement which gave it birth. The influence of

> Judaistic Christianity of the ordinary type or types after the apostolic age, as far as our evidence goes, must have been small on the contemporary Church, and almost nothing on posterity. But the strange Clementine literature...must from century to century have obtained such a hearing as was given to very few other remains of Antenicene literature." 6

It is rather interesting to note here that once again the Essene influnece seems to permeate the Judaizers' position, elusive and yet being felt by the Christian community in its struggle with heresies.

(c) Montanism

To conclude this chapter on Judaistic heresies, we turn to a consideration of Montanism, a heretical theology which grew up in Mysia near Phrygia about 156 A.D.. The founder, Montanus, a pagan convert,shortly after his conversion began to prophesy in a manner which the church soon came to doubt. Later he was joined by two women, Maxmilla and Priscilla (or Prisca), who, after Montanus' permission to desert their respective husbands, also claimed to possess the prophetic charisma. Montanus claimed to have, or to be, the Paraclete which Jesus had promised, denying that the Apostles had the perfection of the Holy Spirit, because it was reserved for new prophets. Eusebius claims that Montanus believed that he was the Paraclete. Slowly at first, it appears that as time progressed the majority of Phrygian Christians became followers of Montanus, and it is fairly certain that by 177 the Montanists were excluded from the "Catholic" church.

Gradually the Montanist teachings began to vary more and more from those of the existing Christian Church.

> "His opponents bear witness that he accepted the canonical Scriptures and was orthodox with regard to the resurrection of the dead and the doctrine of the Trinity, But in another sphere his innovations were considerable."[7]

The headquarters of the group were set up at Pepuza, just across the Phrygian border. This city became the new Jerusalem of Eastern Montanism and was even given that name. It was the Montanist hope, that the final Parousia of the Lord would come to this site, that led some to call the group Pepuzians. Montanus and his companions were considered to be the last of the prophetic line and thus the succession would end with them. In performing their functions they assumed many of the traditional roles of the bishops which led to an even deeper cleavage with the church. Rules regarding fasting were set up and rigidly followed thus eliminating free will from such observances. Certain abstinences were also a part of their religious practice:

> "This was the natural outcome of a system which invested the exhortation of the prophets with a divine sanction, giving them the character of unalterable laws, to be observed as ends rather than means of the attainment of holiness..." 8

After the death of the last of the three original prophets about 175 A.D., there followed a period of peace. About 200 A.D. the "new prophetic" influnece again arose. Ultimately, members of the movement were found in Asia Minor, Egypt and Constantinople, but the vast majority of them were still around their sacred city.

The early Montanists were active writers. Some were accused of composing new Scriptures in their numerous tracts.

> "A necessary result of this was the tendency to division. The Montanists must have regarded the writings of their own prophets as of at least equal value with the Scriptures; they constituted in fact, if not in intention, an enlargement of the Canon. It was inevitable that they should be used, like the canonical Scriptures, as authoritative expositions of dogmatic Christianity and that, like them, they should be variously interpreted. By the end of the 2nd century there were two parties of Montanists, who took different sides in the Monarchian controversy, and both of them appealed to the oracles of the prophets as well as to the Scriptures...Thus the authority ascribed to the writings of the prophets produced a tendency of parties differing from one another in matter of faith, and probably also in matters of discipline. This tendency would be greater if as seems likely, such writings were not collected into a 'corpus'. Each community would follow the teaching of such books as they happened to possess, without the obligation of harmonizing it with that of the books possessed by the other communities ." 9

Although there were many names for this sect, no one was predominant until much later. Many of the groups were known by the name of the local leaders. It has, however, come down through history with the name Montanists simply because of the loose connection between the groups who felt that the 'Paraclete' had been manifested in one Montanus.

The writings of Irenaeus and Eusebius indicate that there were Montanist associations as far west as Rome and Gaul by 177 A.D. Such bodies were bound in loose federations with fellow Montanists and were definitely "schismatic". About 175 A.D. a particular attempt was made to bring Montanist ideas to Rome. These even received some

support from the existing pope, but his letters of favor were soon withdrawn and we are told that although the influence was small and lingering, little was heard of Montanism in Rome after the fifth century.

There was some support for the movement in Spain. However, Africa proved the most fertile ground and even Tertullian became a strong supporter of the teachings of Montanus. Tertullian's writings suggest that his knowledge of Montanist doctrine was limited to only a few of their writings, which for the most part were not very unorthodox. He supported without reservation the idea of prophetic inspiration through the Paraclete. Tertullian does not comment on the Montanist doctrine of prophetic succession or the holy city of Pepuza. He rejected the idea of women speaking or acting in the Church's Sacraments, which would suggest that he rejected much of what was solid Montanist doctrine in Asia Minor.

(d) Other Heresies

Montanism was strongly opposed in many quarters, and so much so by some that they rejected completely the fourth gospel and its Logos Christology. To these groups the title Monarchians was given, indicating their stress upon the unity of God. The Dynamic Monarchians, those favoring an adoptionist Christology, were somewhat different from the Modalistic Monarchians who held that Christ was only a temporary manifestation of God. Theodotus, a prominent Monarchian, was excommunicated in 190 A.D. Sabellius, the most

eminent leader of the Modalistic group, found a considerable following among Christians of Egypt and North Africa, but was also excommunicated for his teachings. The equality and yet unity of the Trinity as he saw it, did not go unheeded by the orthodox church and later such thought found much in common with the theology of Augustine.

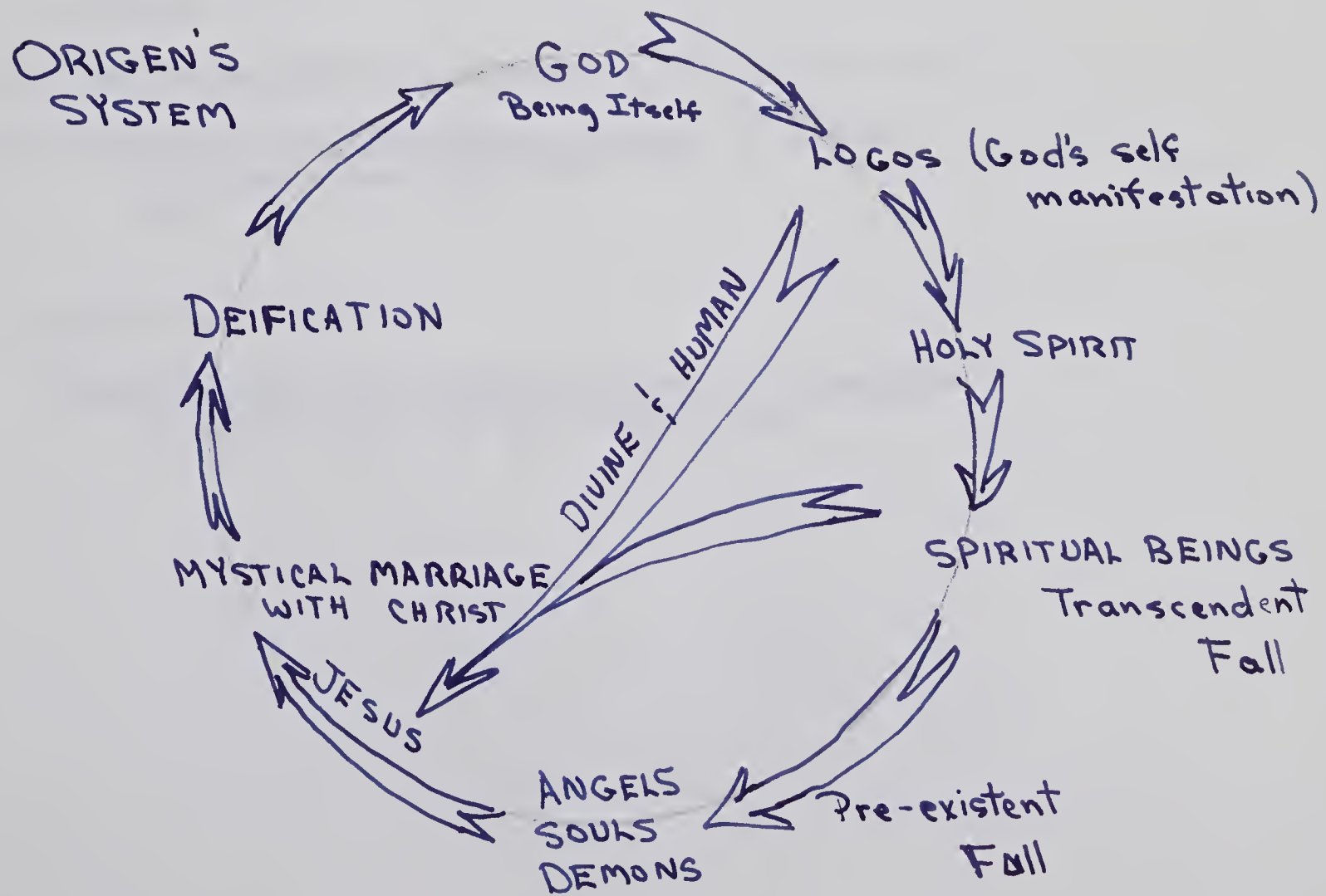
> "The Modalism of Sabellius was not orthodoxy; it was considered to be heresy but it was a positive step towards the final orthodoxy of Nicaea. It formulated a full-fledged doctrine of the Trinity. It brought fresh suggestions as to the infinite richness of the divine nature." 10

Controversy raged in the early church over such doctrines and in the year 400 A.D. the Alexandrian Synod declared the great scholar Origen a heretic. The son of Christian converts, he studied under Clement at Alexandria. Eusebius reports that upon Clement's withdrawal from the Alexandrian school, Origen became head of the school. An educationalist and scholar of high calibre, Origen was most productive in the area of writing. A rich friend, Ambrose of Alexandria, provided the means for Origen's publications. After several clashes with Demetrius of Alexandria, Origen was expelled and defrocked. A new school under his leadership was constituted at Caesarea, but questions as to his orthodoxy continued to arise. His "De Principiis" (First Principles) is the first great systematic theology. His cyclical system leaves open the possibility of moving away from God, i.e. Freedom.

Walker suggests that "... it is easy to see how he could be quoted on either side in the later Christological controversies".

In Origen's system, the Logos emanates from God (God's self-manifestation), and the Holy emanates from the Logos. (See diagram) Two divergent trends develop, namely that the Logos is of the same substance with the Father or of the same essence. Origen's successors split and some saw no difference between God and Logos; others denied the divinity of the Son altogether.

From this brief example, and without going into the Christological controversy within the Church of this period, the reader will note the difficulty of defining the term "heretic", and in determining to whom it should apply.



References:

1."Colossians"2:8 - 21 (R.S.V.)

2."The Early Christian Church"- Carrington
Vol. 1

3."Judaistic Christianity"- F. J. A. Hort
MacMillan and Co. - New York 1894
Page 127

4."Documents of the Christian Church"- H. Bettinson
Oxford University Press - London 1944
Page 52

5."The Early Christian Church"- (see above)

6."Judaistic Christianity" - P201 - (see above)

7."Hasting's Encyclopaedia of Religion
and Ethics Vol 8."

8. H.E.R.E. Vol 8

9. H.E.R.E. Vol 8

10."The Church's Debt to Heretics" - P80 - (see above)

11."A History of the Christian Church"- W. Walker
Scribner - New York 1959
Page 77

Supplementary Reading:

"Montanism and the Primitive Church" - J. DeSoyres
Deighton, Bell and Co - London 1878

Chapter Two "Gnostic Heresies"

Gnosticism is defined by Webster in the following way: "A philosophicoreligious movement of pre-Christian times and later, having several forms, Pagan and Christian, all of which were characterized by the central doctrine that emancipation came through knowledge, gnosis, the possession of which saved the initiates from the clutch of matter".

The Christian Gnostics were eclectic in that they too could not be content with the Christian Gospel, finding themselves desiring something more; in this case the saving power of Christ was not enough but in addition to it, in the words of Webster, an "emancipation through knowledge".

R. M. Grant, in his book "Gnosticism", gives the following list of the oldest Christian-gnostic systems: Simon Magus, Menander, Saturninus, Basilides, Carpocrates, Cerinthus, The Ebionites, The Nicolaitans, Cerdo, Marcion, The Encratites and Tatian, The Barbelo-Gnostics, The Sethian-Ophites, and The Cainites.

The reader should notice that one of these groups, The Ebionites, were also discussed in the Judaistic group, and it would be well to note here that some of the early heresies do fit partially into both groups, i.e. Judaistic and Gnostic.

> "What is it which...makes it possible for us to speak of its authors and devotees as Gnostics? After all, in antiquity the adherents of the Gnostic systems did not usually call themselves 'Gnostics', and the Church Fathers spoke of them as members of various sects often named after their founders. Moreover the word 'gnosis' was used among Christians in speaking of the

> saving knowledge of Christian faith. But there is one element which binds all the various systems together. This is the doctrine, to a considerable extent shared with the Jewish apocalyptic writers of the period, that the world is bad, it is under the control of evil or ignorance or nothingness. It cannot be redeemed, indeed for some Gnostics the world is the equivalent of hell. Only the divine spark, which somehow is imprisoned in some men, is capable of salvation. It is saved when, by divine grace, it comes to know itself, its origins, and its destiny ." [1]

The writings of Irenaeus place the origins of Gnosticism with the followers of one Nicholas who promoted the doctrine that the material world is the creation of a demiurge and not the creation of God at all. By 150 A.D. such ideas were widespread throughout the Roman Empire, led by such men as Basilides and Marcion.

(a) The Docetics

The Docetics were among the earliest of the Gnostic Heretics. Born of legitimate reasoning, the Docetic ideas sprang from a desire not to lower God by accepting the notion that He would enter into a human body as Jesus Christ. Thus they claimed that Christ appeared to be human but was really a phantom who only looked like a man. The Incarnation and Passion, held so dearly by the Christian Church, thus lose their importance and significance. Docetic Christians, if they could still be Christians, seriously compromised earlier beliefs for the sake of this doctrine.

> "Gnosticism, properly speaking, was something much more far-reaching. The height of its influence was from about 135 to 160, though it continued a force long after the latter date. It threatened to overwhelm the historic Christian faith, and by so doing brought upon the Christian

> Church its gravest crisis since the Pauline battle for freedom from law. Its spread and consequent peril were made possible by the relatively weakly organized, and doctrinally undefined state of the church at its beginning. The church overcame the danger; and in so doing developed a closely knit organization and a clearly defined creed, which contrasted with the more spontaneous and charismatic nature of primitive Christianity." [2]

Jones, in his book quotes A. Clutton Brock in saying "There is only one fatal heresy about Christ, namely the heresy called Docetic, which robs Him of all reality".

(b) Eclectic-Gnosticism

Eclectic-gnosticism appealed to some of the Christians who felt that good portions of other philosophies and ideologies should be added to Christian teachings. "Gnosis" was seen in this sense as "saving knowledge", a sharing in which was the "key to life". The Hellenistic gnostics were likewise willing to absorb some Christian ideas. Dualism also characterized this heresy, i.e. an evil world and a Good God. The general Gnostic doctrine separated the Good God from the evil world by a series of 30 "aeons". The God of the Jews was seen as the "demiurge" creator only one step above the evil world. Bodies were believed to be prisons for souls, constructed by the God of the Jews. The Savior God therefore had the task of battling to free the souls from their bonds.

Men were divided into three classes i.e. Spiritmen (Gnostics), Soul-men (Orthodox Christians), and Flesh-men (those with no hope).

Christ, the "Savior God", could not have suffered according to these Gnostics, and therefore they agreed with the Docetics regarding Christ's Passion. Many of them believed that Simon was really

crucified while the phantom Jesus looked on.

Gnostics were often partly Pauline in doctrine and used such passages as "among the mature do we impart knowledge" for support in their claims to a search for "saving knowledge". They implied that the Apostles were aware of this secret knowledge and tried to cover it up. To this the "Anti-Gnostic" Fathers replied "Blasphemy".

Polycarp strongly condemned the Docetic and Eclectic Gnostics in his writing. One of the outcomes of this struggle with Gnosticism was the hastening of the formation of the Canon. The Apostles' Creed itself bears witness to the struggle within Christendom between what was to be the Orthodox position and that of the heretics.

Many of the Gnostic sects claimed secret revelations to their founders often involving the so called sacred books of some supposed ancient religion. A similar claim to revelation is also made by modern Latter Day Saints. (This will be discussed in Section IV).

(c) Marcionism

> "This organization was the offspring of Marcion. Whereas the other great Gnostic leaders had been essentially philosophers founding short-lived schools of religious thought, Marcion was a religious leader who founded not a school but a church, which lasted for several centuries and was the main conservator of Gnostic ideas. Marcion was less ambitious in his views than the other Gnostic teachers. Though he taught in the midst of the second century, when Gnostic speculation was at its height, he was not interested in discovering families of eons. To him the universe was simple. There was the visible world in which we live, a cruel world governed by

> the principle of retribution; there was the heaven of the Creator-God, the Demiurge, the stern Jehovah of the Old Testament. Finally, as it were in another dimension, there was the true God, the Kind Stranger, gentle and merciful, Who always existed but only revealed Himself to man by sending His spirit, Jesus Christ, on earth to oppose the bleak teaching of Jehovah with the gospel of Love. Marcion was profoundly struck by the divergency between the messages of the Old and New Testaments. The latter he in no way saw as the complement of the former; even the Messiah prophesied in the Old Testament, the warrior avenger, could have nothing to do with Jesus. The two teachings, he considered, were in utter opposition to one another, and he made this opposition the basis of his creed ."[3]

Marcion, the rich ship owner, came to Rome from the south shore of the Black Sea. He was rich enough to purchase a copy of the Scripture for his own personal use. He found it difficult to reconcile the God of the Old Testament with God as described in the New Testament. After hearing the Gnostic teaching, he decided that the Old Testament God must have been merely the Demi-Urge Creator of the World. Marcionists believe that Christ came from the Good God of all, but was not accepted by the Jews because their Jehovah stirred them up to destroy Him. Coming from the Good God, Jesus could not have suffered, thus Marcionists were also Docetics. Marcion uses only the portions of the Gospel according to St. Luke that fit in with his system,leaving out the birth stories as well as those portions in which Jesus acknowledges the Creator God as His Father. Marcion felt that he was more trustworthy to transmit the Gospel than the apostles themselves. He also abridged the Letters of the Apostle Paul and this version of Luke and Paul be-

came the Scriptures of the Marcionist church. A modern parallel can be found in those groups who use only selected portions of the Scripture, stating that certain parts have been improperly transmitted. For example the Mormon doctrine of Celestial Marriage or Marriage for Eternity rejects the validity of Matthew 22:30 regarding the resurrection state. In 144 A. D. Marcion was excommunicated. However, many Marcionist churches using the Marcionite New Testament canon continued to grow and expand. For the Marcionists, the material world being evil, asceticism is a necessary virtue. The eating of meat and sexual intercourse are avoided so as not to acknowledge more than necessary the creator-god.

"Marcion's movement was probably the most dangerous of those associated with Gnosticism. He sundered Christianity from its historic background as completely as had the more speculative Gnostic theories. He denied a real incarnation, and condemned the Old Testament and its God. All this was the more plausible because done in the name of a protest against growing legalism. For such a protest there was much justification. His churches spread extensively, in the Orient especially, and survived into the fifth century. His own later history is wholly unknown ."[4]

References:

1. "Gnosticism" - R. M. Grant
Harper and Bros. - New York 1961
Page 15

2. "A History of the Christian Church"- Walker
Page 51

3. "The Medieval Manichee"- Runciman
Page 8

4. "A History of the Christian Church"- Walker
Page 55

Supplementary Reading

"The Church and Gnosis" - F. C. Burkitt
Cambridge - 1932

"The Donatist Church" - W. H. C. Trend
Oxford - 1952

Chapter Three "Other Heretical Developments"

(a) Manichaeans

The founder of the Manichaeans, Mani, began his teachings about 242 A.D. The period of his ministry was only thirty-four years, as he was martyred by the command of the Zoroastrian King of Persia in 276 A.D. In a very real sense, he could be classed as a Zoroastrian heretic but he is also classified with Marcion among the principal heterodox or heretical Christians. His cosmogony is similar to that of the Gnostics and his church organization was copied almost directly from the Marcionites. He called himself "Mani, Apostle of Jesus Christ". Central to his doctrine, was the concept of two realms, light and dark, and so he is also classified among the Dualists. Within a century of his death, there were Manichaean churches from Turkistan to Carthage. By the year 1000 A.D. the Manichæans were still the most powerful sect in east Turkistan. From 373 A.D. to 382 A.D., St. Augustine himself was a Manichaean . Later, after a change of heart, he bitterly attacked it but Manichaean ideas continued to flavor his doctrinal writings. In Africa, the Manichaean church faded with the vandal invasions but it flourished in Syria and Mesopotamia until well into the tenth century. Much of its impetus in other areas was spent by 700 A.D. One of the chief reasons for its failure was its anti-social nature. Some historians suggest that the reason for the rapid growth of the Manichaean church lies in the attack upon it by the church and so revered a church-

man as St. Augustine. This was in direct contrast to the quieter career of the Marcionite church and its appeal against legalism (see Pp.32). As Manichaeanism grew, the movement absorbed the bulk of Gnostic-minded Christians.

One historian sums up the situation concerning the divergence of heresies in this manner:

> "...there were many brands of heretics to battle with the Orthodox and each other amongst the early Armenian Christians; and medieval Armenia was fit ground for heresy. The Church was a hereditary affair. The Catholicate and the bishoprics passed regularly from uncle to nephew. Dynastic interests outweighed spiritual interests in the minds of most of the hierarchy. The feudal nobility usually did its utmost to secure the favour of the Church. The poor peasant might well feel resentful to find no ecclesiastical help against his often oppressive lay over-Lord; he would yearn for some less proud and splendid church to give him comfort and answer his depression. The heretic sects thus attracted a large congregation. Unfortunately in the darkness of the following centuries we cannot tell precisely which of them was to fall and which to persist. After the Fourth Oecumenical Council, at Chalcedon in 451, the whole Armenian Church, from injured pride and petty patriotism rather than from deep theological sentiment, lapsed into the Monophysite heresy. Henceforward the Greek orthodox writers in view of this major problem could not take any interest in the minor heterodoxies of Armenia. Nor do the Armenian historians give us any help."[1]

(b) The Arian Controversy

The Arian Controversy began when Arius, a presbyter in Alexandria, charged the bishop with being a Sabellian. The bishop in turn accused Arius of being unsound in his own theology. The battle which began here was to wage within the church for some

three hundred years. The main problem centred around the question, "Whether Christ was created by God; whether there was a time when He was not?" Arius was excommunicated in 321 A.D., but he found some encouragement in Eusebius of Nicomedia. The problem was to fit a proper doctrine of Christ in with a Monarchian concept of God. If the Logos was separate from God, then He must be substantially different. Some have called this the beginning of the Unitarian position, but, in fact it is different from historic Unitarianism in that here Christ is not a good man, in fact, he is not a man at all. He is an intermediary and thus, neither God nor man. Included in this controversy was a good deal of pagan philosophy, making doctrinal positions even more hazy.

In the early 4th century a host of new converts followed Constantine, the Emperor, into the Church. They knew little of historic Christendom and were particularly troubled by the Incarnation. To this group the Arian ideas appealed greatly. Athanasius, who lived from 300 - 373 A.D., was strong in his refutation of the Arians. He cared less for logic than experience, whereas Arius had tried to arrive at his position through the process of dialectic. At the Council of Nicaea, which met in 325 A.D., a neutral baptismal creed was at first accepted and then amended. Controversy developed over the word "homo-ousios", meaning "of the same essence", referring to the relationship between God and Jesus Christ. Arius and two of the bishops refused to sign the Council document and as a result were exiled. From this point, reaction

to the Nicene Creed mounted. The ultra-Arian party asserted that Christ was a creature and therefore essentially unlike God. A third group pushed for the adoption of a creed which would use the terms "substantial likeness". In 381 the Council of Constantinople confirmed the Nicene faith and in 383 Arianism was made an illegal religion for Roman citizens.

Ulfilas, a missionary to the Goths, carried with him an Arian tradition, traces of which were to be found on his mission fields for some generations.

> "It was no small achievement to get the matter settled once for all that even if God be nowhere else present in person in this world, He was at least substantially present in Christ. That was what Athanasius stood for against the world, and, when the mists of battle cleared, Athanasius had won ." [2]

(c) Theodore of Mopsuestia

Theodore of Mopsuestia worked at the close of the fourth century. In many ways he was a "modern" type of exegete, although in using this term one must realize that although this was his pattern, he lacked the critical modern methods of exegesis. He taught in his theology the humanity of Christ, body and soul, that Christ was complete in his manhood and that his human experience was one of perfection. Theodore's concepts included the belief that the Logos was pre-existent with the Father and became incarnate in Christ Jesus. Through his belief in the complete and perfect manhood of Jesus, his ultimate victory is attributed to the indwelling of God in him. After Theodore's death, his work, although not particularly

deviant in itself, became a breeder of heresy as others used it to their own ends.

(d) Nestorius

Nestorius was the Archbishop of Constantinople in 428 A.D. He preached against the use of the concept of "ΘΕΟΤΟΚΟΣ". The rivalry at this time between Constantinople and Alexandria aggravated the "ΘΕΟΤΟΚΟΣ" Controversy. It was Nestorius's feeling that some theologians were attempting to make Mary a goddess. It was his belief that in describing the mother of Jesus, the term "ΧΡΙΣΤΟΤΟΚΟΣ" , rather than "ΘΕΟΤΟΚΟΣ" , should be used, i.e. "Mother of Christ", rather than "Mother of God".

At the Council of Ephesus in 431 A.D., Nestorius was anathematized with all those present signing the excommunication order. He spent the remainder of his life in a number of different misfortunes and harassments. In 489, the Edessa school, which had long been a centre of Nestorian thought, was dissolved and disbanded. Later, a new centre was established at Nisibis and Theodore of Mopsuestia became one of the great writers of the sect. Nestorian ideas and doctrine flourished for some considerable time in and around the area of Damascus. In Persia, it survived for centuries under the title of "Chaldean Church". This Chaldean Church had certain Zoroastrian tendencies. By the thirteenth century there were some twenty-five metropolitan sees around Baghdad. During the seventh century, some of its missionaries travelled as far as China.

(e) The Pelagian Controversy

Pelagius, who lived during the later part of the fourth and the early part of the fifth centuries, was more greatly concerned with the practical life than he was with schemes of belief. He felt that the description of God given by Augustine was far too autocratic in comparison to "the Father" that Christ had revealed. Pelagius found himself to be in sympathy with Theodore of Mopsuestia, Chrysostom and Nestorius. He attributed man's "fall" to definite individual acts of sin, i.e. acts of free will, and he attributed Augustine's view of the fall to the Manichaean influence in his life. To him, human nature created by God cannot be utterly depraved.

> "Pelagius and his disciples, stood for a Christianity, the main emphasis of which was the <u>moral</u> emphasis, rather than the theological. They insisted that the first question to ask about any theological system is, does it stand for a God who is morally good, and does it help men to be better men and to lead better lives? If not, it is unsound theology. The rock on which they built was the moral reason of man, and they protested against a Christianity "in bondage to stupid and godless dogmas ."[3]

The chief opponents of Pelagian ideas were Jerome and Augustine. In 431 the Council of Constantinople condemned both Pelagius and Celestius, his disciple.

> "The time was not ripe for the proclamation of faith in the divine capacities and endowments of human nature. Augustine, and not Pelagius, or Theodore, or Nestorius, spoke the word which fitted the mental temper and genius of the time, but these beaten and condemned heretics were the champions of ideas which are quick and vital in the modern world to-day ."[4]

References:

1. "The Medieval Manichee" - Runciman
Page 30 - 31

2. "The Church's Debt to Heretics" - Jones
Page 103

3. (as above) Page 127 - 8

4. (as above) Page 130

Section III

"HERESIES AND HERETICS"

(Chalcedon-1800)

Chapter Four "The Medieval Period"
(451 A.D. Reformation)

(a) Bogomils

The first heretical development that we shall consider in this transitional period is that of the Bogomils of the Balkan Peninsula. This heresy was well developed by the middle of the tenth century and its beginnings can be found during the reign of Tsar Peter of Bulgaria, who was of the orthodox tradition. During this time a Bulgarian priest named Bogomil, began a movement which later bore his name. Little is known about his life or the extent of his preaching yet despite this mystery, his teachings generated a Christian heresy that survived for many centuries in many parts of Europe. Dualistic in nature, it demanded of its followers complete renunciation of the natural world in so far as such is possible. The "Dragovitsa" were one of the later Bogomil groups although their beliefs differed markedly from traditional Bogomil doctrine which was monarchian in flavor. In Macedonia this heresy was well established by the eleventh century. Many French heretics of the twelfth century were called Bogomils although their connection with the original movement is difficult to ascertain, The term "Poplicani" (from the Greek term Paulicians or Parlikeni) suggests that a good deal of dualist-Paulician-Bogomil missionary activity stemmed from basic origins around Constantinople. In 1143 these heretical groups were denounced on at least five major issues. In the first

place they failed to recognize the orthodox concept of the Trinity. Secondly, the Logos was seen as an angelic power but not equal with the Father. Thirdly, the idea that the Creator was Synonymous with the "Prince of Evil" was taught. Fourthly, the Bogomils and their associates placed no value in the sacrament of Baptism or the Eucharist, suggesting that these were valueless innovations originating false tradition. Fifthly, the orthodox church condemned them for their lack of reverence and adoration of the cross.

The spread of heresy followed the westward movement of civilization. The most important centres of Bogomil heretical activity by the end of the twelfth century were in Bosnia and Lombardy, although literature also circulated in Russia. Some Bogomil flavor can be seen in the Dukhobors in so far as there is some dualist belief and a Christology of adoptionism. The influence of Bogomil thought can be seen, in Serbia in the second half of the twelfth century, somewhat later among the Huns, and in Bosnia, where there was a good deal of Bogomil dualist theology emerging eventually as the Bosnian state religion. In 1203 the Patarenes abjured this heresy to a papal representative at BjeloPolje. In a report given to Pope Honorius III in 1221, the situation was described as one of rampant heresy. With the Turkish invasion in 1463, there was a decline of the Patarenes and the faith of the Bogomils perished, "Its sacred legends fading, as elsewhere among the Slavs, into a set of improbable popular fairy stories". [1]

(b) Cathars

The heretics known as Cathars were found in both France and Italy. They, too, were divided into two branches, dualists and monarchians, the former believing that there were two principles involved in life and the latter that the evil god was a fallen angel. The doctrinal beliefs of the Cathars are recorded in documents of the Inquisition. These heretics believed that Christ was in no way human, that he was a divine being who taught by example like a divine Buddha. They had a basic distrust for the writings of the Old Testament and practiced asceticism in their daily lives. By the middle of the fourteenth century, most of the Cathar influence was ended. Marseille and Avignon became heretical centres where French nobles toyed with these ideas. Many Cathars tended to be docetic and the Cathar society was divided into Believers and the Perfect. Elaborate ceremonies were conducted for the reception of new members, accounts of which are available in both Catholic and heretical writings. The French and Italian Cathars and the Bogomils of the Balkan peninsula were closely related and many of their legends and vernacular scriptures came from similar Eastern origins. Records indicate that the scandalous behavior of certain Cathar groups did much to speed the decline of Christian dualism.

> "In Eastern Europe traces of the Tradition can now only be found in popular legends and fairy tales; and possibly it was the part-inspiration of the fantastic sects that have arisen from time to time in Russia. In Western Europe the traces are even less

> distinct. Writers who seek to find the heirs of the Cathars in the Protestants of the Reformation or even in the earlier Protestants that we call the Lollards and the Hussites, do Protestantism an injustice. To Wyclif, to Luther and to Calvin, Satan was certainly a great god and the world an evil place, but emphatically God Himself was God the Creator, Jehovah of the Jews. They never rejected the Old Testament nor denounced the Patriarchs. Their anti-clericalism was a movement directed against the morals and luxury of the clergy, not against fundamental Christian doctrine. They wished to reform and simplify the Church, not to introduce a new religion. Christ to them was the Second Person, the God made Man, not an Eon or an eminent member of the Elect. Their spiritual ancestor was Peter Valdes rather than Mani or Marcion or any Dualist prophet'." [2]

(c) Amaurians

Amaury, from whom this group received its name, was a citizen of Paris in the early thirteenth century. Salvation, to the Amaurians, was to be found in the act of believing oneself to be a living member of Christ; and heaven and hell were seen as inner states. They believed that when the Holy Spirit becomes incarnate in men there is an end to law, commands and sacraments. The Amaurian heresy was strengthened by attempts to stamp out the movement and followers were attracted in Sens, Langres, Troyes and later in Strasbourg. Known as a "Sect of the Spirit" it had a Montanist flavor, and evidently set out to break with the historic church although signs of its influence developed within the Monastic movement itself. Under Pope John XXII, sweeping condemnations of the Amaurians were made, yet they existed in relatively large numbers until the Reformation.

> "These champions of the Spirit from the days of Montanus to the days of Joachim were often wild and confused. They were enthusiasts, "pneumatics", and they often took a "rebel" attitude toward existing institutions and systems. They belong in the "dangerous" line of mystical descent, through the Irish Philosopher, John Scotus Erigena, rather than in the "safe" line through St. Augustine and Bernard of Clairvaux. The same two lines of danger and safety appear again at the Reformation ." [3]

(d) Peter Abelard and Peter Waldo

Abelard was tried and condemned for heresy in 1121 by the Council of Sens. He had definite Sabellian tendencies; and treated the Trinity under three modes: power, wisdom and love. His spirit of criticism, rationalism, doubt and inquiry was challenged by Bernard of Clairvaux on the issue of faith vs. reason.

> "Abelard had not only discarded the ancient theory that Christ made atonement to the Devil, but he had attained the insight that no expiation was needed and no substitutionary sacrifice was required. The coming of Christ and His dying in our behalf is the miracle of Grace, and the effect of it is the redemption and moral transformation of those who see and feel the significance of this amazing gift of love. The whole work of Christ is thus vital and spiritual, not to execute a scheme. Here in germ, if not something more, is the profoundest modern view of the atonement, and here at last we feel as firm a grasp of the humanity of Christ as of His divinity. Bernard may have been of stronger moral fibre than his opponent was, and he may have more truly deserved the title of "saint", but he knew less clearly what the atonement meant than did the man whom he branded as "heretic"." [4]

Peter Waldo, in the latter twelfth century, was greatly influenced by dualist and anti-church heresies, to the end that he gave up his wealth to form a band of lay preachers and followers who came to be known as Waldenses. Their influence spread to various

places throughout the continent and they were caught up in the general movement of dissent and discontent with the existing church. Strict pacifists, refusing to take a life under any circumstances, they refused to swear in court or in conversation. In many ways theywere forerunners of later Protestantism though they lacked leadership and the religious climate was not yet ready for their reforming ideas. Although their knowledge of history and scripture was inadequate, and their approach often negative they did expound the view that man must come to experience a better way of life. Thus the Sermon on the Mount was dear to their hearts.

During the Albigensian Crusade, under the leadership of Pope Innocent III, and Simon DeMontfort, many lives were destroyed and through the Inquisition the Albigenses were wiped out.

(e) Others

It will be recognized that in attempting to bridge the period between Chalcedon and 1800 many of the groups mentioned can be covered only briefly. Three final names are called to the reader's attention: John Wyclif, John Huss and Joan of Arc.

John Wyclif (1320-84) was born in Yorkshire and studied at Baillol College, Oxford where for a time he was a professor. Augustinian and Platonic concepts influenced his thoughts greatly. Eventually appointed to Lutterworth parish, where he remained until his death, Wyclif developed a critical attitude towards the Church and in his criticism he was supported by the Duke of Lancaster who felt Wyclif might be helpful in efforts to obtain certain church properties. In his "Civil Lordship" lectures at Oxford, Wyclif presented a feudal type of Church structure in which God the land-lord retained his stewards (church and civil officers) only as long as they were faithful. A believer in churchly poverty, Wyclif received support initially from the mendicant orders and opposition from the church hierarchy and orders holding property. Such opponents could do little in the face of Wyclif's strong backers in the nobility.

Wyclif believed that the true Church included all of the "elect" under the leadership of Christ. He inferred that a pope eager for power and possessions was not one of the elect and the mendicant orders were only unscriptural supports for a power-seeking papacy. Although it is unlikely that full credit can be

given to Wyclif for the translation into English of the Vulgate, it is likely that much of the translation is his, the remainder being done by another under Wyclif's direction. In order to bring the vernacular Gospel to as many as possible, Wyclif's "poor priests" as they were called, travelled widely in teams of two and were well received.

Wyclif's followers, Lollards by name, were quite numerous. However, his attack on the doctrine of "transubstantiation" cost the movement considerable support. The Peasant Revolt of 1381 caused a rise in conservative feeling which led to the condemnation of many Lollard positions, the arrest of numerous "poor priests" and a weakening of Wyclif's own influence. His scholarly approach made him a feared opponent in intellectual matters, and his association with the court prevented further attack upon Wyclif individually. Under Henry IV a number of Lollards were burned at the stake. Wyclif died in 1384 and was declared a heretic some 30 years later. Although he stressed purity of life, loyalty of spirit and effectiveness of service, he was condemned as a heretic chiefly on the issue of transubstantiation and his anti-papal views. Lollard supporters were driven underground by persecution but many of them continued to meet secretly, and were eventually absorbed into the Reformation movement.

John Huss (1373 - 1415) became associated with the ideas of Wyclif at the University of Prague where he maintained a connection even after ordination in 1401. Theologically a disciple of Wyclif,

Huss did not deny transubstantiation. He believed firmly in the predestination of the Church under the leadership of Christ, the law of the New Testament and the ascetic life. As a preacher, in the Bohemian language, he gathered a large popular following during his ministry at the Bethlehem chapel in Prague. A nationalist at heart, Huss supported the Bohemian cause against outside influence. The establishment of the University of Leipzig, of which Huss was the first rector, was an indication of Bohemian nationalism. Huss was excommunicated in 1410 and there followed a popular uproar in Prague where he was highly respected. His opposition to the issuance of papal indulgences further brought Huss into disfavor with Rome. In 1412, while in exile, he produced his "De Ecclesia" (On the Church), but in 1413 when Wyclif's writings were condemned, Huss, who followed Wyclif closely, found his own writings in increasing disfavor with the Church. In 1415 he was burned at the stake for heresy.

Hussites who gave both the bread and the cup in the Eucharist were given the name "Utraquists" (fm. Latin "both"), while other more militant and radical Hussites of Tabor were called Taborites. The "Unitas Fratrum" of 1453 ("Unity of the Bretheren") bound together many Utraquists, Taborites, other Hussites and also many Waldensians. This movement has led to the modern Moravian Church which celebrated the five hundredth anniversary of the event in 1953.

Wyclif and Huss have been called "pre-reformers" by some

historians although it should be noted that the issue of justification by faith which was at the heart of the Reformation does not appear here.

The career and personality of Joan of Arc differ greatly from that of Huss and Wyclif, yet she is an important figure of the era who was also branded a heretic. Although burned at the stake in 1431, she remains to many a symbol of commitment and conviction, whose heresy was the assertion that she was directly responsibile to God and not to the Church. Although such an assertion sounds "protestant", when viewed in the light of her strange and superstitious behavior, it does not fit well here either. A prophet of individualism demanding the right to hear directly the voice of God, Joan of Arc remains for the most part a confusing character in the drama of heresy. Martin Marty in "A Short History of Christianity" puts it this way, "...through the confusion, however, there remains a glow of holiness in an example of steadfastness the world cannot lightly forget". [5] Once more the definition of heresy depends greatly upon the ecclesiastical climate in a given age.

References:

1. "The Medieval Manichee" - Runciman
   Page 115

2. "The Medieval Manichee" - Runciman
   Page 178

3. "The Church's Debt to Heretics" - Jones
   Page 161

4. "The Church's Debt to Heretics" - Jones
   Page 195

5. "A Short History of Christianity" - Martin E. Marty
   Meridian Books Inc. - New York (1959)

Chapter Five "The Reformation - 1800"

During this period, the term "heretic" is even more difficult to define, as its use is determined almost completely by the viewer's position regarding the Reformation itself. Rufus Jones describes Luther as an extreme conservative in matters of doctrine, and had this been the only issue, Luther would hardly have been called a heretic even by the Roman Church itself, as he was even more adamant than most of his contemporaries in such dogmas as that of Original Sin. He agreed with St. Augustine that man's will is wholly unfree. [1]

Luther was very loathe to accept the validity of revelation outside of Scripture and believed that God is mediated through Christ and that Christ is seen through the Word. As such a man of the Scriptures, Luther was suspicious of all claims of inner illumination. His position concerning the Eucharist was that of"consubstantiation" i.e. that the presence of Christ becomes manifest in the elements. He exalted secular callings and promoted a society of the status quo where a man remains where he is called whether it be as peasant, nobleman or priest. Luther also advocated refusal to obey commands that contradict the Law of God as revealed in Scripture, not as active rebellion but as passive resistance. Roman Catholics saw Luther as being too radical, while Puritans and Evangelicals accused him of being too conservative. The Peasant Revolt of 1524-5 had the effect of making Luther's position even more conservative in nature. Unlike some of the other Reformers, Luther did not attempt to discard every-

thing in the church not found in Scripture. Rather he felt many of these things could be retained as long as they did not contravene Scripture.

While the Lutheran movement progressed in Germany, the reformation in Switzerland proceeded under the leadership of Ulrich Zwingli (1484 - 1531). In many respects, Zwingli was a Christian-humanist who attacked church practice in numerous areas such as lenten customs, tithes and the sale of indulgences. Zwingli's encounter with Bernardine Sampson runs parallel to Luther's confrontation with Tetzel over the "indulgences" question. Some of the notable points of the Zwinglian movement included such concepts as: Christ is the only way and mediator; massis not a sacrifice but a memorial; marriage is open to all; the priesthood is one of all believers; and only God forgives sin. Zwingli also promoted more adequate priestly training, more public reading of the Scriptures, mass in the vernacular and the abolition of mass for the dead, pilgrimages, and images. Balthasar Hubmeier challenged Zwingli on the matter of infant baptism, holding that the only true baptism was the baptism of believers. Followers of this position became known as Anabaptists although this was never a single, coherent, clearly organized group. Their opponents charged them with re-baptizing, hence the name. Ananbaptists suffered a great deal of persecution and many of the Anabaptist leaders were forced underground. Moravia became one of the centers of Anabaptist influence, while another Anabaptist, Menno Simons of the Netherlands, became the father of the Mennonites.

The theology of Zwingli agreed in part with Erasmus and in part with Luther. In matters of Scripture he was more a legalist than Luther, but concerning the Holy Spirit he was less rigid, holding that the Spirit can even be seen in good pagans. Faith was important to Zwingli but not in the Lutheran sense of being the cornerstone. To Zwingli, faith was to the soul as health to the body.

John Calvin (1509 - 1564) is probably best known for his "Institutes of the Christian Religion" a monumental apologia of the reformed position. The name of Michael Servetus arises during this period; as an adoptionist and anti-trinitarian he corresponded with Calvin under the pseudonym Villeneuve. Servetus was quite contemptuous of Calvin's "Institutes" and responded with his own "Christianismi Restitutio". He was involved in the Socinian movement which was,

> "...an attempt to think Christianity through to its foundations and to re-interpret it freshly, sincerely and boldly without regard to tradition or dogma, but with an awakened and kindled passion for ethical and social ideals ." [2]

Servetus was recognized and arrested while attending Calvin's church, and although Calvin visited him in prison, he had little success in persuading Servetus to change his stand. Servetus was eventually condemned and burned, despite Calvin's attempts to have the execution changed to the more merciful use of the sword. Fausto Sozzini, one of the Socinian leaders, made continued sweeping attacks on the theological interpretations of the Reformers. These anti-trinitarians were using the title "Unitarians" officially as early as 1600.

Although space does not permit a full treatment of John Calvin's life, his encounter with Servetus is worthy of note. Returning to Calvin's own theology, we find that he is indebted to Luther whom he regarded highly, and with whom he largely agreed on predestination, justification by faith and the uniqueness of Christ as mediator and sole means of salvation. To Calvin, the proof of being among the elect comes through faith which is demonstrated in good works, i.e. one is not saved by good works but such are the sign of election. Concerning the Scriptures, Calvin was most legalistic and held that the prophets and apostles were true secretaries of the Holy Spirit. Concerning the Sacraments, Calvin lies somewhere between Luther and Zwingli, denying the physical presence but confirming the spiritual presence of Christ. For Calvin the signs of the true Church are faithful preaching of the word, administration of the Sacraments and enforcement of the discipline of God.

A later post-reformation religious movement worthy of note was founded by George Fox (1624-91). Known as the Society of Friends or Quakers they believed that every individual receives a certain measure of light from God, and that such revelation is not limited to the Scriptures but can also come directly to all who are true disciples. Quakers rejected an organized ministry, use of the Sacraments except as inward truths, oaths, titles, war and slavery. Spiritual earnestness and a dislike for formalism characterized Quaker thought. However, it was not until they had suffered a great deal of persecution that they were granted freedom of worship in 1689 through The Act of Toleration.

The post-reformation period also saw the rise of Rationalism during the eighteenth century in France, England, and colonial America. It should be noted that Rationalist thought was characterized by an excessive confidence in the power of reason and distrust in things emotional. Deism was one of the results of the Rationalistic movement and in it the concept of God was that of an abstract supreme being.

> "Congenial to religion without passion and to God without person, the rationalistic sentiment worshiped a God of nature and reason, who was universal in the responses of the religions of men ... among them, Christianity ." [3]

Universalism is the final movement to be considered in this section. John Murray (1741 - 1815) founded organized Universalism which espoused a doctrine of universal salvation. Although of Calvinist background, Murray believed that Christ had made full atonement for all sin and thus all men would receive salvation, the faithful now, and all others in the last days. A later Universalist, Elhanan Winchester (1751-97), added to this doctrine a belief that the unrepentant, although eventually to be saved, must go through a period of purification, i.e. a kind of purgatory. Hosea Ballou (1771-1852) determined the direction that Universalist thought in America was to take more than either of the formerly mentioned men, and through him Universalism took on a Unitarian outlook. The belief that final salvation comes when men through punishment turn to God, remained a part of Universalist doctrine.

Although only briefly surveyed, the foregoing illustrations will help the reader to understand the mushrooming effect during the post-reformation period in terms of sectarian groups. Now we turn our attention to the modern period.

References:

1. "The Church's Debt to Hertics" - Jones
   Page 226

2. (As above) - Page 239

3. "A short History of Christianity" - Marty
   Page 297

Supplementary Reading:

"Victorian Heretics in London"
Christian Century - May 15, 1963

Section IV

"MODERN DEVIATIONS"

In the modern setting of the Church, there is great divergence of opinion regarding the basics of faith. A graphical illustration used by the editors of Time magazine several years ago, looked for all the world like the root system of some enormous tree. There are, of course, varying degrees of tolerance and intolerance within churches, and many feel that all the others are deviations. Generally, the contemporary heretic is often regarded by the church as one who says or intimates "my door is the only door to God". There are many groups which deviate from what the majority of Christians believe to be the essential truth of the faith. Some of these seem to stand out more clearly than others and for the purposes of this paper, certain of these have been chosen although it is impossible to classify them into exact categories, such as Judaistic or gnostic. It will be seen that there are some which appear legalistic to an extreme misrepresentation of the Gospel, and others that attempt to search for special knowledge. Both of these tendencies are common to early heretics as well. In the former classification, are placed Mormons, Seventh Day Adventists and Jehovah's Witnesses and in the latter group, Theosophists and Spiritists, Christian Scientists and those who have made Moral Rearmament their church.

Writings on these groups are almost inexhaustible. One does, however, have to be careful in judging their quality and accuracy. It would seem well to scrutinize cautiously the "I was a ---, now I am saved !"type of publication.

Chapter Six "The Judaistic Type"

(a) Seventh Day Adventists

Adventists hold that the keeping of the Saturday Sabbath is a central point of religious salvation and also that there will be a chosen people numbering one hundred and forty-four thousand (144,000) who will find ultimate salvation. Adventists believe that the second coming will be quiet and will result in no tortures or purgatories but a simple annihilation from which only the "chosen" can hope to survive. William Miller, a Baptist student of the Holy Scriptures, in 1831 announced that the second advent would take place in 1843. Born in 1782 in Massachusetts, Miller was fascinated during his maturing years, by the books of Daniel and Revelation. His forecast concerning the 1843 advent was revised to 1844 and it was his belief that only his followers and those who accepted the prophesy would be saved. When his calculations proved wrong, Miller admitted his mistake and was quite repentent and said "We should never be ashamed to confess our errors". However, his followers were less constrained to change and further revelations were claimed by Mrs. Ellen White who stated that Christ had come in 1844, cleansed heaven's sanctuary and revealed to her the stone tablets of the law on which the fourth commandment stood out as most important. Adventists accept her testimonies as being the most true exposition of the Scriptures and all other churches have been described as "the whore of Babylon", in their rejection of God's laws. Their belief that

the time of the advent can be determined negates Matthew 24:36 and their extreme views regarding Saturday do not seem to take into account Galatians 3:23-25. Thus, like ancient Judaistic heresies, they stress Old Testament regulations, taking only those parts of the New that fit in with them. Ellen White is quoted as follows on page 449 of The Great Controversy, "...in the last days the Sabbath test will be made plain. When this time comes anyone who does not keep the Sabbath will receive the mark of the beast and will be kept from heaven..."[1]

It would appear that Adventists disregard the New Testament evidence which indicates that Christians did worship on what is known as the Lord's Day. Acts 20:7, I Corinthians 16:2 and Revelation 1:10 are some of the related passages. Paul did preach in Jewish synagogues on Saturday but the New Testament also records that Christians gathered on the Lord's Day, the day of resurrection, the day of Pentecost and the day on which the disciples were commissioned to go into all the world. Seventh Day Adventists claim that Christian worship on the Lord's Day originated with the Pope and yet there is a good deal of New Testament evidence to indicate that it was the day of worship long before there was a Pope, as such, in Rome. Adventists have tended to move in where a missionary start has been made by Christians. One cannot doubt the sincerity of many Seventh Day Adventists, but, as Christians, we must be true to the Scriptural authority of our beliefs and thus we believe them to be sincerely wrong.

A good deal of legalism is found in Adventist belief such as prohibition against tea, coffee, tobacco, pork and other things similar to Jewish food laws. Their idea of death is that the human soul goes into a non-existent state until the millenium. Adventists divide the Old Testament into moral law, i.e. the Ten Commandments, and ceremonial law.

It has also been believed by many Christians that Seventh Day Adventists have placed too much stress upon the personality of God thereby minimizing the fact that God is Spirit and is to be worshipped in spirit and in truth (John 4:24).

The doctrine of the return of Christ in 1844 to the sanctuary of heaven to examine the sins of this people, also repels many Christians. As well, we find distasteful the Adventist idea "that in the consummation of the history of sin, upon Satan, as the father of all evil, God will lay the immeasurably heavy guilt of bringing sin, with all its train of tragic consequences, into the world; and that this will bear out the type as found in the ancient sanctuary service (Leviticus 16:7-10, 21, 22)".(This quotation comes directly from the Adventist publication "What do Seventh Day Adventists Believe?")

The idea that only one hundred and forty-four thousand will be saved seems to Christians to be a rather presumptuous trespassing upon the jurisdiction of God. These claims lead to certain intolerance among Adventists, characteristic of groups claiming to be the only ones fully following the commandments of God. Adventist

baptism is by immersion; and church structure is congregational in nature. Their missionary zeal and Biblical consciousness are commendable although, from our point of view, very misguided. Generally, they are placed outside of the traditional Christian fellowship, which feels that they fall into the error of mixing grace and works as did some of the Galatians, i,e. that man must add to the work of Christ in the cross. For example, the following question and answer in the Adventist publication, "Fundamentals of the Everlasting Gospel" by A.E. Lickey, 1947.

> "Do you accept Christ's sacrifice and God's commandments?"
>
> "The Bible protection against receiving the mark of the beast is faith in Jesus Christ and loyalty to God's commandments. The Sabbath will be a specific test ." [3]

Harold Lindsell, in the April 14, 1958 issue of "Christianity Today", illustrates the difficulty in categorizing religious groups in that he denies their evangelical nature and would place them in a category with the Roman Catholic Church.

> "SDA as surely - in distinction from Christian Science and Jehovah's Witnesses - does not deny the absolute deity of Christ, nor reject his atoning sacrifice on Calvary. SDA rather is at fault in its doctrine of salvation and falls into an error common to Romanism. In all probability, it should be classified with this very group - which it marks off as responsible for changing the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday - in the denial of the sufficiency of Christ's death for man's salvation. SDA, in my judgement, is not evangelical and never will be until this serious error in its teaching is rectified ." [4]

(b) Jehovah's Witnesses

A second modern judaistic heresy is that of the Jehovah's Witnesses, originated in 1872 by Charles T. Russel of Pittsburgh. Having in the past been known by several names such as the Millenium Dawn, International Bible Students' Association and Zion's Watch Tower Society, it today goes by the name of Jehovah's Witnesses. "Judge" Rutherford led the group from 1917-42 and in 1947, it was declared by the Canadian Supreme Court as "not a religious body".

Modern Jehovah's Witness' principles are autocratic, hierarchical and monarchian if not unitarian in nature. Jesus, they hold, was "created" of God and before the Incarnation, was the Archangel Michael. On earth, however, Christ was an ordinary fallible mortal but a very good one. Salvation, they say, comes through imitation of Jesus. Justification, for them, is thus through works and not through faith. Witnesses reject the doctrine of the resurrection, advocating a belief that Christ only received a new spiritual body and that his human body was just supernaturally removed from the tomb.

Present day Witnesses believe God's Theocracy on earth will begin in 1984 and that only one hundred and forty-four thousand (144,000) who profess Witness beliefs will be saved. Witnesses claim that Protestants and Roman Catholics are inspired by Satan and that together under the Devil's leadership constitute the anti-Christ taken from Pauline literature of the New Testament.

The Jehovah's Witnesses have been likened to mystery religions because of their arbitrary selection of scriptural supports and the more obscure apocalyptic literature such as Daniel and Revelation.

The Eschatology of the Jehovah's Witnesses is similar in many respects to that of the Adventists. C.M. Nicholson in an address to the Conference on Ecumenical Affairs sponsored by the Halifax Presbytery at Pine Hill Theological College in January of 1965 stated: "Many of the aspects of their beliefs put them outside what we consider to be the Christian fellowship".

The founder, Chas. Taze Russell, whose doctrines were similar to the Arian Heretics of the fourth century, set 1914 as the date when the Kingdom of God would be established in Heaven in a struggle between Jesus and Satan. Following this would develop a generation of trouble, eventually leading to the "Battle of Armageddon" which according to "Witnesses" could begin at any moment. Some non-Witnesses will be given a final opportunity, but refusal will mean annihilation. The 144,000 chosen ones will then help in the ruling of heaven. Some 131,000, including famous Old Testament characters, have already died and the remaining 13,000 will be "Jehovah's Witnesses" according to Witness belief.

> "The New World Society of Jehovah's Witnesses (to use its full name) is a classless organization in which the remnant aren't superior creatures; they are simply people with special assignments ."[5]

Witnesses also believe the bodies of eternity will be of flesh and blood. Few intellectual demands are made upon the membership

and every man, woman and child old enough to understand the basic beliefs of the sect can be ordained. The demands that are made upon the membership are demands of self-sacrifice and devotion, e.g. daily readings, weekly meetings and regular door to door canvassing.

An important part of the Witness organization is the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania with Headquarters in Brooklyn, New York. The publishing program began in 1879 and today "Watchtower" has a circulation of 4,000,000 (64 languages) and "Awake" a circulation of 3,600,000 (25 languages). Both are semi-monthly publications which are purchased by Witnesses and either re-sold or given away. It is estimated that there are some 50,000 Witnesses in the world today.

The Witness' services are held in buildings that the group have chosen to call "Kingdom Halls". Men only are allowed to preach in the services. It is noteworthy that Witnesses will often cut ties with family and former friends who are not Witnesses in order to spend more time in the organization's activities.

One of the areas in which Witnesses have gained a considerable amount of public notoriety is in their refusal to give or accept blood transfusions. They also refuse to observe Christian holidays. However in March or April they do celebrate a festival of "The Lord's Evening Meal".

Their refusal to pay allegiance to Queen or flag have also led to some difficulties with governments and other appointed authorities.

Hunting and fishing are normally rejected, as well as Armed Service, and voting in elections.

Other concepts that Witnesses reject include: a Hell of torment, the immortality of souls, Jesus as the incarnation of God, the Trinity and salvation by grace alone. The doctrine of the Trinity they attribute to the Roman Catholic Church; and in the matter of the Crucifixion they believe that Christ was impaled upon a stake and not nailed to the Cross.

Theirs is a machine-like organization run with big business precision. Under Rutherford's leadership they published "The New World Translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures". No scholars are named and the book simply bears the inscription "by Authorization of the Creator". In this abridgement of the New Testament the words "Κύριος" and "Θεός" are rather inconsistently translated to suit Witness doctrinal concepts.

Although both Russell and Rutherford claimed to place great importance on sound scriptural interpretation, both ignore the principles of such interpretation and allegorize to fit Scripture to the preconceived patterns which they themselves set. Criticism of this nature is dealt with simply by saying that they have been appointed to open the mysteries of the Bible.

Witness doctrine seems to encourage the concept of obtaining blessing by merit.

> "Jehovah created this world to be the everlasting home of man on the condition that man prove his obedience to God under trial. Lucifer, the lord of the visible

> world, became disobedient to God and challenged Jehovah to put a creature into this world which would not blaspheme and reproach God. God gave Satan the opportunity to do his utmost in defying the name of Jehovah, in order that it shall be clearly seen that man can obey God's theocracy. Of course, at the present time Satan is still ruling the world, and only comparatively few are able to recognize the claims of the Lord Jehovah. But Satan's dominion will soon be destroyed, and then God's theocracy will be established; mankind will be obedient; this world will be the everlasting kingdom of Jehovah; and God's original purpose of creation will be realized. This is the sum and substance of Rutherfordism. All other teachings, his denial of the Trinity, of the deity of Christ, of the immortality of the soul, of hell, of the church, stand in relation to this central idea ." 6

Rutherford and later Witnesses were very sharp in their criticism of the Doctrine of the Trinity. In one of his books "Riches", Rutherford states: "Therefore it definitely appears that the doctrine of the so-called 'holy trinity' is another of Satan's lies".

Witnesses see the story of Job as illustrating the triple alliance of Satan. The three friends are interpreted as representing (1) organized Christendom i.e. religion, (2) Satan's spokesman i.e. politics and (3) worldly business i.e. commerce.

As was briefly mentioned earlier, Witnesses reject the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, stating it to be one of Satan's fabrications and Rutherford suggests that the soul is the union of the body and God's breath and when man stops breathing, he loses his soul or the right to live. It is also suggested that man's soul is no different from that of the animals.

According to Jehovah's Witnesses' thought, there are four classes in the divine system. Firstly, "the great mystery class", who followed Christ in perfect obedience; therefore like Him, they have received the right to live. This group will form the spiritual part of God's organization. Secondly, there are the Old Testament believers who will also be a visible part of the Kingdom. Thirdly, there is the multitude class which will multiply and fill the earth. This class will defend, protect and assist the mystery class but are not included themselves in the spiritual group. Fourthly, the rest of mankind who will get a final chance to prove themselves in the divine theocracy. Failure will for them result in annihilation.

> "Jehovah's Witnesses do not want a savior. They want no mercy, no grace, no pardon. They want a chance to show how good they are. They want a theocracy in which law and order prevails and they can work out their own salvation. Man must decide his own fate. Commenting on Is. 1:18, Rutherford says:
>
> 'The fact that God asked man to reason with him shows that he is not going to arbitrarily deliver man and give to him blessings without man's consent. If the destiny of man is fixed, without regard to whether he accepts or rejects the provision made for him, then there would be no occasion for him to reason with the Lord. This forever puts to silence the theory of predestination of every creature'.
>
> Rutherford wants no forgiveness for Jesus' sake. He says of the saints who washed their robes white in the blood of the Lamb that they did "their own washing". And this is the theme that runs through all of Rutherford's writings. His system is a pagan and natural religion with a rather thin veneer of Christian terminology ." [7]

(c) The Church of Jesus Christ of
Latter Day Saints (Mormons)

Mormonism is a missionary spirited sect which gained much of its impetus from the saga of one Brigham Young and the trek of early Mormons westward to Utah. These early Mormons banded together as a "brotherhood in simple faith". However, when one views the origins of the L.D.S. Church, they are more complex than they are simple.

Joseph Smith, its founder and high prophet, claimed to have received revelation at the age of fifteen years which later enabled him to unearth two golden tablets and two interpreting crystals. Evidence of any substantial nature has never been provided for this discovery but the present Book of Mormon is said to be a translation, direct from reformed Egyptian script, done in 1827-29. Mormons claim that the tablets were left in America via an overland route or by sea. These two tribes were alleged to have seen Christ after His resurrection as described in the New Testament. After the translation was made, Smith was shot by aroused citizens, becoming the first Mormon martyr. Smith's death prompted the western movement of the L.D.S. and as was the case with earlier heresies, such persecution only served to strengthen the movement.

Mormon doctrine swings far from the "orthodox centre". However, there are some divisions within Mormonism itself. Traditional L.D.S. doctrine involves polygamy, baptism for the dead and celestial marriage. God is viewed as an exalted man and the Mormon priesthood

is seen as the Kingdom of God. Jesus is described as the product of a union between this Adam-God and Mary, and is said to have been married to the Marys and to Martha. This latter doctrine was used as a support for polygamy, stating that Jesus is descended from David through Bathsheba; therefore had not David been a polygamist, there would have been no "Messiah".

The Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints has been called "Either a gigantic hoax or a great miracle". 8

It was Smith's assertion that the last of the prophets were commanded to write an abridged version of the Biblical prophecies and that these should be hidden to be later reunited with the Bible and thus, the Book of Mormon becomes a Biblical supplement with equal authority. Smith stressed miracles, speaking in tongues, faith healing, the American Zion, the millenium and the new rule of Christ.

The Mormon State of Utah became very prosperous and in 1895 was brought into the Union after giving up the doctrine of polygamy. Mormon missionary activity was and has remained an important part of the L.D.S. community. Traditional Mormon doctrine, such as celestial marriage, i.e. marriage for eternity, and baptism for the dead have widened the breach between Latter Day Saints and orthodox Christianity, but one of the basic problems remains the Book of Mormon itself. The following illustrations are noted by E. Keith Ditterich in his book "Some Distortionsof the Christian Faith". They lead

him to be very sceptical, of the authenticity of the book, as are many others. In the Book of Nephi, word for word quotations from the seventeenth century Westminster Confession of Faith are apparent. The last section imitates the eighteenth century Methodist Book of Discipline. Also, verbatim transcripts of Luke 3:4 and John 1:26-27 appear to have been lifted from the Authorized Version of the Bible of 1611. Later editions of the Book of Mormon have apparently been abridged to avoid previous errors and troublesome passages.

In comparing 3 Nephi 12:3-48 with Matthew 5:3-48 it would appear that the writer of the former had a copy of the latter in the King James version lying open before him, even to a synchronizing of many verse numbers. A similar pattern seems to emerge in I Nephi 21:10 comparing it with Rev. 7:16-17. 2 Nephi verses 30-32, although claiming to be prophetic are written not as for the future, but rather as descriptions of the past. The suggested dates 545-559 B.C. and the fact that 2 Nephi 31:8 is so similar to Luke 3:22 raise serious doubts. This type of prophecy is certainly like none found in the Old Testament i.e. "the tense" used.

To Christians, Christ is the ultimate and only necessary revelation of God and the Church is repelled by the Mormon suggestion that the New Testament revelation is insufficient and the suggestion that Jesus, in a sense, was preparing the way for the later revelation claimed by Smith.

One prominent writer, Fawn M. Brodie, in her biography No Man Knows My History, the story of Smith's life, suggests that Smith was

the victim of his own deception and that his story received such wide acceptance among his family and neighbors that he was unable to confess its true origin without completely losing face.

In judging Mormon beliefs, the Christian Church finds it lacking in a number of areas, some of which are: Mormon beliefs in the physical nature of God,[a] the procreative powers of God [b], the downgrading of Jesus, the suggestion of his marriage [c], and their doctrine of man [d]. [9]

> "All gods were once men somewhere, and all men may become gods in some sense. 'In a literal sense we shall never attain his (God's) exact position. He will remain the Supreme Being. 'As God is, man may become' is, however, a beautiful and meaningful ideal' (RLS, 50). The form in which this statement is most often quoted is this: 'As man is, God once was; as God is, man may become'." [10]

It is the Mormon belief that after the last of the original apostles died, the church fell into an age of apostasy during which the power of God was not with them. Smith supported this view when he claimed that God had indicated to him that he should not become associated with any of the existing churches. God, in the Mormon view, restored his church with the revelation to Smith and from this belief comes their title "Latter Day Saints". Protestants, orthodox and Catholics alike, have lost all right to the priesthood and restoration comes only through the L.D.S. For the Christian church which believes that God so loved the world that He sent His only begotten Son, this concept that God would suddenly drop out of the picture, leaving this world He loved for some eighteen hundred years, is

untenable and heretical.

Mormons have traditionally believed that the Negro or dark-skinned man bears the mark of Cain and, as such, he may belong to the Mormon church but cannot undertake the office of the priesthood. This concept diverges from traditional Christian belief, if not practice, that men are equal in the eyes of God. Although women play an important part in the work of the Mormon church, they do not hold office in the priesthood. Mormons believe that Daniel 2:44 refers to the Latter Day Saints "which shall never be destroyed".

After the death of Joseph Smith, a group which was not taken with the leadership of Brigham Young gathered around Smith's son, Joseph Jr., who took over leadership of what has become the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, headquarters in the city of Independence. Joseph Smith's ideal of complete unity between church and state was realized in Utah by Brigham Young. The Mormons, after Young's death, accepted a division of Church and state in order to gain statehood for Utah. Mormonism has been viewed by some as a kind of evangelical socialism in which the members work strenuously to build the Kingdom upon earth, which leads basically from a doctrine of eternal progress towards godhood. A passion for education has been a part of Mormon tradition, also the idea that material prosperity was a true indication of the blessings of God. Mormonism bore many of the attributes of frontier American life.

"...Joseph's theology -- a patchwork of ideas and rituals drawn from every quarter -- became in his hands a thing of color, warmth, and originality. Joseph believed in the good life upon earth, in work, laughter, and brotherhood. Tolerant of the foibles of his friends, since he could not easily forget his own, he provided a heaven where all men would be saved. And he made of that heaven a continuation of the good life of earth. Since work was a prerequisite to joy in this life, so should it be in the next. Since his wife and children were dear to him, he made the marriage convenant eternal, and allowed for its expansion. Since power was sweet to him, he gave to every convert the promise of dominion over a star.

Joseph in his own person provided a symbol of nearness to God and a finality of interpretation that made the ordinary frontier evangelist seem by comparison all sound and fury. There was a great hunger in his people, and they accepted him for what he set himself up to be. They believed the best of him and thereby caused him to give his best. Joseph's true monument is not a granite shaft in Vermont but a great inter-mountain empire in the West ."[11]

References:

1. "The Great Controversy" - Mrs. Ellen White
Page 449

2. "What do Seventh Day Adventists Believe?"
Seventh Day Adventist Church
Pacific Press - California
Page 8

3. "Fundamentals of the Everlasting Gospel"
A. E. Lickey
Adventist Publication 1947

4. Christianity Today - periodical
April 14, 1958 Issue
Page 15 "What of Seventh-day Adventism?" - H. Lindsell

5. Maclean's Magazine - periodical
August 25, 1962 Issue
"New Look at a Turbulent Sect" - Hal Tennant

6. "Jehovah's Witnesses" - F.E. Mayer
Concordia Publishing House - 1954
Page 15

7. As above - Page 33 - 34

8. "Some Distortions of the Christian Faith" - Ditterich
Page 27

9. (a) "The Religion of the Latter Day Saints"
L. L. Bennion - L.D.S. Utah 1940

(b) "Journal of Discourses" - B. Young Vol XI
Page 122

(c) "Journal of Discourses" - O. Hyde Vol II
Page 80

(d) as above (a) Page 50

10. "If my daughter should want to Marry a Mormon"
P. Malcolm Hammond
Tidings Press - Nashville

11. "No Man Knows My History" - Fawn M. Brodie
Alfred A Knopf - New York 1963
Page 403 - 404

Supplementary Reading:

"Pentecostals and Others" - C. M. Nicholson
Conference on Ecumenical Affairs
Halifax Presbytery Jan 15-16, 1965

"The Lord's Day in the New Testament"
Good News Series No. 13
S.D.A. - Southern Publishing Assoc. - Nashville

"Sect, Cult and Church in Alberta" - W. E. Mann
University Press - Toronto 1955

"The Converted Jehovah's Witness Expositor" - W. J. Schnell
Vol VII - Issue No. 1 1964
"Sects of Russellism"

"The Heretics" - Walter Nigg
Knopf Press - New York

"Fundamental Principles of the Gospel" - S. O. Bennion
L.D.S. - Utah

"Mormonism" - Einar Anderson
Moody Press - Chicago 1956

"Mormonism on the Move"- R. A. Cheville
Christian Century - Oct. 30, 1963

"Book of Mormon" - L.D.S. - Utah 1950 Copyright 1948

"Articles of Faith" - L.D.S. - Utah 1952 Copyright 1913
J. E. Talmage

"Doctrine and Covenants"- L.D.S. - Utah 1952 Copyright 1949

"ERA" - L.D.S. Periodical Nov 1961 Issue

Chapter Seven "The Gnostic Type"

(a) Theosophy and Spiritism

Theosophy is based on the concept that to certain spiritually and intellectually advanced persons there is available an unusually intimate knowledge of God. The contemporary Theosophy finds its origins under the leadership of Madame Blavatsky and Colonel Olcott in the latter quarter of the nineteenth century in New York State. Claiming to be truly universal, the Theosophist is eclectic in that he compares, contrasts and uses portions of Spiritism, Jewish and Egyptian doctrine, portions of Eastern mysticism, as well as Hindu and Buddhist concepts. The Theosophists, in viewing the divine, approach pantheism and man's salvation comes through moving up a progressive scale which finally leads to his salvation. To the Spiritist, God is most impersonal and kept in the realm of Creator-Sustainer. The divine "inspiration" which fell upon Biblical writers and men of faith is scorned by Theosophists as wishful thinking. Such a view of history and religious development places Christ in the scheme of things as a medium of high order but no more. The teaching of "spirits" is thought to supersede or go beyond traditional Christian teaching. Jesus Christ, to the Spiritist, is not divine in that they believe that Christ does not claim to be God made manifest in the flesh. Such a view also denies the activity in the world of a personal Holy Spirit. The Theosophist, if asked to describe God might respond with a term like "the absolute", i.e. he is beyond human understanding. He is an imper-

sonal force but one which permeates all things. Worship, according to this view, is simply an identification with and a praise of "living nature". Jesus can then be no more than a great teacher giving fragments of religious inspiration and, as such, comparable to Buddha, Confucius, Plato and other of the great philosophers.

Sin, to the Spiritist, is really non-existent. Life is divine destiny and evil but a false comparison. It would follow from this that in such a system, there can be no atoning value in the cross and salvation becomes a matter of gradual "bettering" through this and other lives. Judgment and punishment find no place in such spiritual development. Theosophy holds similar views. Good and evil are seen only in the relationship of cause and effect and man's past must work itself out in future incarnations. However, future habitations of the spirit are thought to be determined by present conduct. Meditation and contemplation are the means to the better life. The atonement comes through the purification process of reincarnation and the pattern is one of spiritual evolution in which the spirit labors to become one with the universal spirit or absolute.

Spiritism has been charged with being an ancestor-worshipping sect although its beliefs in progressive development of the spirit make this charge inadequate. Spiritists do, however, believe that communication with departed souls is possible and also necessary in the preparation for salvation. Spiritism, like Theosophy, originated in New York State although somewhat earlier, about the middle

of the nineteenth century. Two names associated with its foundation are those of Margaret and Kate Fox.

One of the difficulties in defining heretics or deviationists is one of terminology, and here we find an excellent example in that Spiritists would have no hesitation in making the profession "I believe in the communion of saints" but their meaning and that of the traditional church are in no way similar as in their eyes, such a profession would be a support for their belief in spiritual conversations with the departed. Christians believe in an after-life through the promises of Christ and His resurrection. Spiritists believe in an after-life on a completely different ground in that they believe that they have communicated with spirits in this life. While Christians reserve for God the right of conferring eternal life, the Spiritist would claim it as an automatic prerogative given to "the man who knows".

(b) Christian Science

Christian Science has been termed one of the most effective of modern heresies. Its founder, Mary Baker Patterson Eddy, claimed that one Phineas P. Quimby had cured her of a crippling disease with his hands alone, and from this she was inspired to write books and to give lectures on the miraculous healing available through Christian Science. Today Christian Science operates a college and a large paper (The Christian Science Monitor) in the U.S.A.

"Christian charity" is claimed by the "Scientists" as a central

doctrine along with the unreality of matter, pain, evil and death. God, to the Christian Scientist, is impersonal and such a belief as the "Trinity" is branded as heathen. They are strict Docetics and deny the reality of any doctrine of Christ in the flesh. God is thus reduced to a role of "means" to the end of man's physical well-being.

Christian Science maintains, to the concern of many, that psychological and physiological disease are completely the same. To them all disease and curing of disease is a problem of mind over matter.

In such a system, God becomes "a principle" rather than a being and prayer is not personal but only a stimulation of the mind to overcome the physical world. Christ is a divine ideal but cannot be a personal Savior and the resurrection becomes merely a spiritualization of thought, i.e. spiritual understanding. To the Christian Scientist the illusions of sin, sickness and death must be erased and divested of all reality, e.g. the resurrection illustrates only that Jesus had not really died. Salvation comes, not from the cross or the empty tomb, but by placing the mind in its proper perspective with the only thing that is true reality, i.e. "God is all".

In 1875, Mary Baker Eddy published "Science and Health With Key to the Scriptures." She was apparently autocratic and domineering in her relationships with others and she was most certainly the controlling power behind her religious system. Her book is viewed

by her followers as scripture and centers around a vocabulary of "matter, science, truth, principle, mind, and error". Some similarities make it comparable with the Book of Mormon in that many authors seem to have had a share in the compilation but the one who was supposedly divinely inspired claimed the absolute credit. Mary Baker Eddy, like Joseph Smith, biographers suggest, experienced mental delusions during her youth.

One of the claims of Christian Scientists which ought to be considered is that of healing. No one should doubt the power of the mind, as has been well shown in the study of psychosomatic medicine, but where Christians and Christian Scientists part company is the denial by Christian Scientists of the reality of sickness and disease. It is the traditional Christian belief that Jesus did not deny reality but recognized if for what it was whereas Christian Scientists are forced to deny the reality of evil because of their pantheistic concept of God.

> "According to Mary Baker Eddy, Man is not only an offspring of God, but identical with God in nature and essence. She writes, 'God, the divine Principle of Man, and man in God's likeness, are inseparable, harmonious and eternal... God and man are not the same, but in the order of divine Science, God and man co-exist and are eternal. God is the parent mind, and man is God's eternal offspring'." [1]

Although the pronouncements of Christian Science are not in keeping with the historic beliefs of the church, or Holy Scripture, it can be seen how such a system could make very definite appeals to those who are ill or suffering, and yet it is firmly held by

the church that the problems of life are not cured simply with a mind over matter doctrine. The following quotation from the The Christian Science publication copyrighted in 1959, "Facts About Christian Science", outlines the groups basic beliefs.

> "The Tenets of Christian Science are found on page 497 of Science and Health and read as follows:
>
> 1. As adherents of Truth, we take the inspired Word of the Bible as our sufficient guide to eternal Life.
>
> 2. We acknowledge and adore one supreme and infinite God. We acknowledge His Son, one Christ; the Holy Ghost or divine Comforter; and man in God's image and likeness.
>
> 3. We acknowledge God's forgiveness of sin in the destruction of sin and the spiritual understanding that casts out evil as unreal. But the belief in sin is punished so long as the belief lasts.
>
> 4. We acknowledge Jesus' atonement as the evidence of divine, efficacious Love, unfolding man's unity with God through Christ Jesus the Way-shower; and we acknowledge that man is saved through Christ, through Truth, Life, and Love as demonstrated by the Galilean Prophet in healing the sick and overcoming sin and death.
>
> 5. We acknowledge that the crucifixion of Jesus and his resurrection served to uplift faith to understand eternal Life, even the allness of Soul, Spirit, and the nothingness of matter.
>
> 6. And we solemnly promise to watch, and pray for that Mind to be in us which was also in Christ Jesus; to do unto others as we would have them do unto us; and to be merciful, just, and pure ."[2]

Let us now consider these tenets individually.

1. It would seem correct to say that the word "inspired" as used here has a double meaning. In denying the reality of such things as death, pain and disease as they appear in the Scriptures the Christian Scientist is, in effect, saying that only certain portions

of the Scriptures are inspired. The position i.e. of varying degrees of inspiration is taken by many Christians; however, the Christian Scientist goes further than this and absolutely denies the reality of the physical world as seen in the Bible. Whereas many Christians, in matters of Scripture, attempt to reinterpret for the sake of understanding, the Christian Scientist rejects completely certain parts.

2. This tenet could be accepted by most Trinitarians simply upon the basis of the wording; but in the light of the impersonal concept of God and the docetic view of Christ held by Christian Scientists, it is far from an orthodox statement. The God who reveals Himself in Jesus the Christ is not being described here but instead a God who is little more than a "Divine Principle of Truth".

3. This third tenet smacks of gnosticism in the use of the term "spiritual understanding" and seems very similar to earlier concepts of "special knowledge". Here again the reality of evil is denied and yet some degree of its reality is retained through belief, i.e. it is real only as long as its reality is believed. This appears to be a convenient way of circumventing the troublesome questions concerning pain in life, i.e. "This that I feel, is only painful because I think it is pain".

4. To the Christian who acknowledges his own inability in reconciling himself with God, the term "Way-shower" is most

inadequate and seems to place the Christ not as Savior but as "Path-finder, the first of Many" in the sense of being merely a demonstrator of spiritual understanding.

5. Tenet five continues to expound the concept begun in Tenet four, i.e. the Cross is merely a tool to "understanding", a proof of the unreality of matter. This is in direct contrast to the Christian concept that the Cross cries out "evil is real, and this is what God does about it". Although accepting the Cross, Christian Scientists use it in a far different manner than does the Church (same words, opposite meaning).

6. Tenet six perhaps causes less concern than do tenets one to five and yet a note of the "special knowledge" concept seems present in the phrasing use of the word "Mind". The "Golden Rule" as written here can be found similarly written in any Christian and pseudo-Christian literature.

As with other modern deviations, the basic teachings of Christian Science may sound fairly acceptable until they are interpreted in the light of Christian Science practice.

It is estimated that the present world membership of Christian Science numbers about three hundred and seventy thousand (370,000). To the Christian, it is not Christian; to the doctor and scientist, it is not scientific. To both these groups, Christian Science might be described as escapism, as is illustrated to some extent by the fact that the Christian Science Monitor chooses to exclude unhappy news.

> "This is the only paper in the world which rules out as inadmissible any reference to death, crime, illness, or the struggles of party politics in its roseate columns. It has neither obituary-notices, nor police court sensations -- nothing, in fact, to arouse alarm or melancholy. By contrast, the realism of the Christian faith enables us to come to grips with the demonic power of evil by the example of Jesus Christ and in the power of the Holy Spirit ." [3]

Christian Science, like other so called gnostic deviations, finds followers in those who cannot believe that the gospel is sufficient for salvation and thus have taken those portions which appeal to them, have abridged others which they find unacceptable and have added a pseudo-scriptural group of doctrines of their own.

(c) Moral Re-Armament (MRA)

The founder of Moral Re-Armament was Frank D. Buchman. The group has also been known by such names as "The Oxford Group", "The New Groupers" and "The First Century Christian Fellowship". In recent years, it has gone simply by the title, MRA. Buchman was born in Pennsylvania in 1878 and trained as a Lutheran minister. His first charge was in Overbrook, Pennsylvania where he founded a boys' settlement. After a disagreement with his board of trustees, he resigned and decided to travel. These travels carried him to Italy and England. While in England, he experienced a radical conversion and returned to be the YMCA Secretary at the State University of Pennsylvania. Here the Oxford Movement began to develop. The theme of the movement was "the Will to be free from Sin". The

organization was basically simple including house-party meetings, quiet time and daily meditation. The movement spread to England, Holland, South Africa, Canada and Scandinavia in the period between 1921 and 1946. The international headquarters of MRA then became located in Switzerland. Although MRA claims to be a system rather than a creed, and urges its members to revitalize the churches to which they already belong, in many respects it has become a sect in that for some it has become their church. Individual confessions are encouraged but, to some outside observers, these have a tendency to become stereotyped.

The basic doctrine of MRA rests in the belief that there are four absolutes in life towards which one must strive. These are: absolute honesty, absolute purity, absolute unselfishness and absolute truth. One of the evangelistic techniques of MRA has been labeled by their opponents as "trophy-listing", emphasizing individual rather than mass revival and attempting to win key persons and then using their names for promotional purposes. In the past, there have been some repercussions when people were listed as supporters and apparently had not given their consent to be so named. On this same basis, the technique has been criticized for dealing in snobbishness.

Moral Re-Armament, however, has simple terminology and insists on the importance of changed lives. The basic criticism of much of their work has been their subjective approach, i.e. overestimating human experience, often to the exclusion of the mighty

acts of God, as found in tradition, Scripture and as witnessed by the great creeds. Christian doctrine does not appear to be necessary in MRA and today it is not really a Christian movement, but simply a moral one in which some MRA followers apparently claim salvation without Christ. The Christian would ask, "Is it possible to follow the Christian ethic without the foundations of Christian theology and belief?" To many, some of Buchman's concepts seem very superficial, such as using the words Powerful Radiograms Always Yours i.e. PRAY, and Just Exactly Suits Us Sinners i.e. JESUS.

> "Furthermore, the Oxford Group misrepresents the first century, for apostolic Christians did not form groups to exchange experiences; they founded churches with a tradition of teaching, worship, sacraments, prayer and ecclesiastical government. The great Reformers, Luther, Calvin and Wesley, did not underestimate the place of the Church in the Acts of the Apostles.
>
> Moral Re-Armament, then, represents 'an unpaid bill of the Churches'. It has, in fact, succeeded where many of the Churches have failed. Protestantism in rejecting the confessional of the Roman Catholic Church has made the mistake of neglecting confession that has content and goes into detail. It has also frequently forgotten that restitution is the index of sincerity in making a confession. It has been content with a Sunday acquaintance with our fellow-Christians, which is considerably less than the New Testament meant by 'the fellowship of the saints'. It has dangerously left the task of witnessing to the professionals of the Church--to those ordained to preach. The theological language of the Church has to be translated into the vocabulary of the twentieth century. M.R.A. may be regarded as a foe of the Christian Church in its lack of interest in doctrine; but its supporters are more significantly identified as the gadflies of the Church than as its heretics. The Church has the light: it needs the warmth of Moral Re-armament." [4]

It will be apparent to the reader that the general terms

"heretic" and "deviant" are insufficient in speaking about such a movement as M.R.A. and it must always be remembered that there are degrees of deviance and heresy. The controversy over the status of M.R.A., as to whether it is a Christian deviation or an evangelical and moral wing of the Church, has come to light in recent times through the publication of two books. The first "A Critical Examination of Moral Re-Armament" by Driberg says some harsh things about the movement and its apparent lack of concern about the historical beliefs of the Church. In reply and rebuttal, J. P. Thornton Duesbery, Master of St. Peter's College, Oxford has published a book entitled "The Open Secret of M.R.A." Perhaps his title is derived from Peter Howard's 1961 publication of "Frank Buchman's Secret" in which Howard speaks most highly of the M.R.A. founder.

Driberg's main contention is that although M.R.A. has professed "Absolute Honesty", it has been guilty of using a less than honest approach. He accuses M.R.A. of the practice of leading the public to believe, through carefully worded advertisements, that M.R.A. has the full support and backing of leading world figures, when such may often be far from the truth. Some of these persons have later categorically denied any association except perhaps the acceptance of an invitation to a friendly reception. Driberg also charges that M.R.A. has claimed sole credit for solving certain domestic and international problems, when such credit belonged equally if not almost wholly to other groups such as the

U.N. or government agencies. He also asks why M.R.A. will not be more explicit about its financial operations and its large industrialist backers. Free discussion, says Driberg, is not allowed and those who disagree with M.R.A. are deluged with letters sent to editors and agencies and written by permanent staff letter writers. Driberg also charges M.R.A. with an over simplification of "perfection", a minimizing of Christian thought and a substituting of a democratic moral principle.

Duesbery claims that Driberg speaks from a position of ignorance, having had only a very limited contact with the Oxford movement some thirty-five years ago. He also charges Driberg with pursuing a personal vendetta against M.R.A. in some seventy-one articles, addresses etcetera.

Regarding the charge of "oversimplification", Duesbery responds that "even such a realist as Buchman was on occasion over-optimistic" but he denies any short-cut philosophy in M.R.A. In the matter of finance, he states that no more than five per cent of M.R.A. backing comes from corporations and that in 1951 British Revenue Authorities examined closely the Group finances, when awarding "charitable status", and made no adverse criticism of it. Appendix V of his book outlines on a percentage basis three years of M.R.A. receipts in Britain, showing by far the largest share of contributions from small donors.

Concerning testimonials and claims to success, Duesbery denies any dishonesty, stating that M.R.A. gives all credit to God and

makes use of only actual statements given by the people named. The charge of minimizing "Christ" in modern M.R.A. outreach is also denied, the denial being supported by a testimonial from Metropolitan of India.

Nothing seems really settled by either book as each charges the other with gross dishonesty and neither writer is likely to change the other's position. Duesbery's book is, however, a good example of the type and quality of M.R.A. publications while Driberg's raises many unanswered questions. (Perhaps the reader will recall the confrontation between the Very Rev. J.R. Mutchmor and Frank Howard, concerning the use of testimonial-type advertising, which illustrates the continuing controversy).

I have included this section concerning Moral Re-Armament because for some of its followers it has become a means of salvation apart from the "good-news" of Jesus Christ. Admittedly, there are other M.R.A. supporters whose beliefs are very much in keeping with historic Christendom.

(d) Unitarians

In including Unitarians in our discussion of heresies and deviations, we run into problems similar to those encountered in the discussion of M.R.A. Is it a Christian deviation or is it simply a religious system, eclectic in nature, with some Christian flavor, and no formal statement of belief?

One Unitarian minister writes:

> "Unitarianism rejects all creeds ; not for the religious beliefs they embody but for their implied intention to bind future generations to the ideas, insights and literal words of the past. It may well be that the Apostle's Creed or the Nicene Creed were good and accurate formulations of the beliefs of most Christians in the third and fourth centuries. But we see no reason why they should remain definitive for religious persons in all times ." [4]

Unitarians proclaim belief in the sacredness of truth and that there must be a rational approach to faith. They believe that it is better to admit uncertainty than to place faith in an unreliable dogma. Religion for Unitarians involves a wide range of human experience but they agree that such religious experience must lead to moral and ethical implications. Such ethical standards as the freedom of mind and spirit, human equality and brotherhood, understanding over fear, unity over division and love over hate are seen as the moral implications of religious experience.

Unitarians worship in a variety of manners and the term eclectic might be applied to their services. Secular writings may or may not be used; and services may include ideas from many

different religious experiences.

The headquarters for Unitarian co-operation is to be found in Boston. Individual groups of Unitarians are congregational in nature and bound only in a relatively loose arrangement with other Unitarian churches. Unitarian congregations are relatively new to western Canada and the western United States, and for this reason there are few second generation Unitarians in these areas. The name derives from their rejection of the Trinitarian concept and thus the title "Unitarians". Unitarians attempt to be active searchers for religious truth and in so doing steer clear of dogmatic assertions. There are no missionaries, as they believe that theirs is a fellowship into which a man must decide to come without proselytization. Adlai Stevenson and Albert Schweitzer were two prominent men associated with Unitarian thought.

Religious education, or the Unitarian equivalent of Christian Sunday School, is held in an atmosphere of freedom and critical evaluation. In a sense it is a study of comparative religion.

Unitarian history dates back almost to the time of Luther. Michael Servetus is described as the father of modern Unitarian thought and his writings on the Errors of the Trinity led to his martyrdom by Calvin in 1553. In 1774 the first Unitarian church in England was established under the leadership of Joseph Priestly the discoverer of Oxygen. From England it spread to America. Examples used by Unitarians of famous men involved in unitarian thought

include: Thomas Jefferson, George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, Oliver Wendel Holmes and Longfellow. Until 1900, the movement experienced some stagnation but by 1937 there was renewed interest and a much faster growth.

Unitarians believe that man must ascertain religious truth for himself. This suggests to traditional Christians a presupposition that man has the capacity for self-salvation. They believe also in the discipleship of advancing Truth, the democratic process in human relations and universal brotherhood. The Unitarian would gladly admit that the Hindu's religious faith has just as much validity for him, as does the Christian's for him. Unitarians also believe in allegiance to a cause for a united world.

Although this is certainly not a definitive coverage of Unitarian thought and history, it is placed here in a sense to indicate the similarity between such thought in modern times compared with earlier movements which were branded as 'heretical' by the early Church. As has been mentioned earlier, our tolerance of such groups has greatly increased over the years and although we might be willing to admit their sincerity we cannot help, by our own convictions, feeling that they are missing "the reconciling love of God as revealed in Jesus Christ".

References:

1. "Christian Science" - C. H. Chambers
   Board of Evangelism and Social Action
   The Presbyterian Church in Canada
   Page 7

2. "Facts about Christian Science"
   First Church of Christ, Scientist
   Boston - 1959
   Page 2-3

3. "Christian Deviations" - Davies
   Page 51

4. "A Pocket Guide to Unitarianism" H. B. Scholefield
   Beacon Press - Boston 1961
   Page 1

Supplementary Reading:

"Modern Heresies" - J. M. Krumm
Seabury Press - 1961

"Within Protestantism, Diversity" - Mary M. Shideler
Christian Century - March 6, 1963

"Modern Rivals to the Christian Faith" - C. Loew
Westminster Press - Philidelphia 1956

"Theosophist Helena Blavatsky" - W. S. Smith
Christian Century - Aug 14, 1963

"Frank Buchman's Secret" - Peter Howard
Heinemann - London 1961

"The Open Secret of MRA" - J.P. Thornton-Duesbery
Blandford Press - London 1964

SECTION V

"COMPARISONS AND CONCLUSIONS"

Chapter Eight Heresies Unchanged

(a) Credit for Sincerity

Throughout the preceding chapters, brief comparisons have been noted as the story of heresies and heretics unfolded through the pages of history. Differences of doctrinal opinion, challenging leadership, and varying environments have led to a wide variety of religious beliefs. Many of the heretics, as we have called them, will be noted as men and women of great sincerity and conviction. It may seem presumptuous to call their efforts misguided, but even though we may feel their sincerity, we, by our own convictions drawn from the historic paths taken by the Christian Church, must insist that they are sincerly wrong.

(b) Difficulty of Classification (some possibilities)

It is difficult to classify and catalogue heresies and heretics. All of our classifications seem to fall short to some degree or other. The terms "Judaistic" and "Gnostic" although helpful are inadequate for telling the whole story. In attempting to sum up the varied thoughts brought forth in this paper, perhaps we should be broader in our classification. A heresy has been described as a belief different from the accepted belief of a church, school or profession. The vast number of Christians who associate themselves with the traditional and historic branches of Christendom are the church with whom the heretics and deviates are at odds. Although numbers do not necessarily indicate a right position, and

the concept of "the remnant" not with standing, it is my belief and conviction that this large and historic grouping is "the Body of Christ", the true Church in the world today. Here there is a "unity" although not a "uniformity" in all things.

It would seem that there are at least two types of heresy today and that the pattern of these types can be seen running through the pages of history. Firstly, there is the heresy of "inadequacy", i.e. those heretics who hold an inadequate position. Our concern is that certain Christian principles are allowed to become obscure, rather than that new doctrines have been added. From this definition, the Unitarians, if they are Christian heretics at all, are heretics of inadequacy. They are not willing to accept the "whole gospel" but only those parts of it that are palatable to them. Further it would seem that there are a number of such small "u" unitarians in many traditional denominations. These heretics are much more difficult to distinguish than the second main type.

This second grouping of heretics might well be called the "additionalist heretics". Although they too may reject certain traditional Christian beliefs, they appear to be much less reluctant to make their position fully known. They are further identifiable by their "additional doctrines" which are tacked on to what remains of traditional theology in their beliefs. It is usually these "additional doctrines" that are most prominent in their public image.

If a third grouping is felt to be necessary, it might include those groups who use traditional terms but who interpret them in very untraditional ways, for example, the Spiritist who speaks about "the Communion of Saints". Semantics play a significant role in any discussion about heresies and when discussing questions of belief with deviant groups, one must be careful to understand what they really mean when they use terminology familiar to our own vocabulary of belief.

Even the three classifications mentioned above are somewhat arbitrary and open to dispute. However, they do help to illustrate the immense problem of classification. A common thread can be seen running through the history of heresy but it is difficult to define succinctly.

(c) One possible reaction to the problem:

It would be my contention then, that this frustration might lead some to say with the Unitarian that "truth" from a religious point of view, is like "beauty in the eye of the beholder", i.e. if it is meaningful to you, it is religiously sound for you. The Christian who affirms that "Jesus Christ is the <u>ultimate</u> revelation of God" is limited in his capacity to accept the validity of other religions. To claim "the ultimate" religious revelation, by definition influences our acceptance of those who apparently feel that "something else is more true and closer to the eternal nature of things".

Here we encounter that line which might be labelled by some

as "intolerance". None of us like to be called intolerant, yet to be true to one's concern for historic Christendom and convictions about the "new covenant" in Jesus Christ, we must stand firm in asserting the eternal truth of the gospel, and stand opposed to those beliefs that are perversions of it. We can accept the heretic or deviant as a person but we dare not give to the world the impression of even tacit approval of his doctrines. It is not an easy road to travel but one which we cannot avoid.

(d) Characteristics

There are a number of characteristics common to many Christian heresies; although not necessarily common to all, their appearance is sufficiently frequent to note.

Ten of these characteristics are:

(1) A discounting of the validity of the historic Church.

(2) A downgrading or rejecting of portions of the historic Scriptures.

(3) The inclusion of ancient, religious laws, abstinences and proper names, or modern equivalents.

(4) An evangelism focussing upon peoples who have already experienced some contact with Christianity.

(5) The retention of Christian titles in official designations.

(6) The stratification of mankind into categories.

(7) The importance of individual founders.

(8) A concept of special saving knowledge or doctrine.

(9) An orientation around a geographic location, in some cases a New Jerusalem concept.

(10) Perhaps most important of all, heretics portray an inadequate picture of Christ.

Having listed these characteristics, some examples will now be given.

The first characteristic listed above, that of discounting the validity of the historic Church, is perhaps the most universal trait of the heretic. It is found among the very earliest. For example, Montanus firmly denied that the original apostles had the true spirit, their apostleship was inadequate, therefore necessitating his apostleship. Modern Seventh Day Adventists and Mormons deny that the contemporary Church has the true spirit and Jehovah's Witnesses go so far as to claim that the Church, that is, the historic Church, is inspired by Satan. Joseph Smith claimed that God indicated to him that he should not associate himself with any of the historic branches of Christendom. Seventh Day Adventists discount the Church on the basis of what they call the Sabbath test.

The second characteristic, that of rejecting portions of the historic Scriptures, and elevating the writings of their founders and prophets, is also predominant among heretics. Montanists were accused of writing "new Scriptures", Mormons have their "Book of Mormon" and Christian Scientists have their "Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures". Many heretics, when questioned as to

their rejection of the historic Scriptures, would probably say, as the Mormons, "we accept the historic Scriptures in so far as they have been properly translated and transmitted". Obviously this makes the rejection of certain Scriptures relatively easy. With regard to new religious writings, these of course are common to all religious groups, but our concern lies in the fact that the heretic seems to be persuaded that the Holy Scriptures do not contain sufficiently all doctrines required for eternal salvation in our Lord Jesus Christ.

The third characteristic is also a serious one, i.e. the inclusion of legalistic systems which are stated to be necessary for salvation. Salvation thus becomes a matter of works rather than grace through faith, for example, the Judaizers of Colossae clinging to Jewish food laws, the Mormons with their abstinences and the Seventh Day Adventists and the Sabbath. Often there may be very good reason for certain abstinences and as such, they are not wrong in themselves, but they are wrong from the Christian point of view if they are seen as being necessary to salvation.

The fourth characteristic deals with the missionary emphasis of heretical groups for this does seem to gravitate towards people who have already been reached, to some extent, by historic Christendom, but who lack a depth of knowledge about historic beliefs. For example, the Christian converts who followed Constantine into the Church in 323 A.D. were sadly lacking in Christian background and thus they fell prey to the heretical doctrines of the

Arians. Similarly today, it would seem from personal experience that Mormon, Seventh Day Adventist and Jehovah's Witness missionaries are drawn to Christians uncertain about what their Church does stand for and whose background regarding beliefs is so vague that they do not recognize the false doctrine of these heretical groups.

Christian heresies often retain in their official designations, titles which can lead the unwary to unwitting acceptance or support. Any group using the name of Jesus Christ often catches Christians with their defences down. For example, Mani, one of the early heretics, described himself as "Mani, apostle of Jesus Christ" and today we find such examples as "The Church of Christ, Scientist" and "The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints".

The sixth characteristic deals with categorization. Any group that claims to be the exclusive avenue of salvation, discrediting all others, has a tendency to categorize those who will be saved, those who might be saved and those who will not be saved. For example, the Gnostics used the three classifications: Spirit men (those who had the saving knowledge), Soul men (Orthodox Christians) and Flesh men (those without hope). Similar patterns become apparent when one views the Jehovah's Witnesses and Seventh Day Adventist doctrines of the one hundred and forty-four thousand (144,000) "chosen ones".

Most heretical groups owe their foundation to a powerful leader. Such leaders are often revered to the place where they may become semi-divine. Interestingly enough, the Unitarians come closest to

a group development. In many ways, Montanus and Mani in the early Church, are comparable to Joseph Smith, the founder of the Latter Day Saints. Charles Taze Russell of the Jehovah's Witnesses has been compared to Arius of a much earlier time.

Christian heresies are generally made up of individuals who apparently feel that the salvation of the New Covenant as recorded in the New Testament is not assuring enough. With the early Gnostics it was supplemented by a concept of "saving knowledge" and by modern Christian Scientists with their "mind over matter" practices which, in fact, even deny the reality of evil.

Heresies do not necessarily choose a geographical location as the centre of their activity. However, during periods of retreat or consolidation certain locations have become identified with heretical groups. One ancient example is the city of Pepuza, which became the hub of Montanist thought. A more contemporary example is that of the Mormons and their temple in Salt Lake City, Utah.

From the point of view of the historic Church, all heretics have held an inadequate view concerning the person of Jesus Christ. The Docetics believed him to be simply a phantom and, as such, robbed of all his humanity. Christian Scientists, in denying the reality of evil and suffering, would similarly strip Jesus in the eyes of the historic Church. It would seem that the picture of Jesus portrayed by the Mormons is all too human and one gets the impression in talking with some Latter Day Saints that what Jesus

was, all men may become. Such words as "all gods were once men somewhere, and all men may become gods in some sense" used by L.L. Bennion in the Mormon publication, "The Religion of the Latter Day Saints", makes one realize that their doctrines of man, God and Jesus Christ are certainly not those of the historic Church. Unfortunately, many Christians are not acquainted with some of these differences which, in fact, are very subtle. To simply lump such groups as Mormons, Seventh Day Adventists and Jehovah's Witnesses in with the denominations of the historic Church is neither wise nor true. In other words, it is grossly incorrect to see them simply as denominations; they are not; they are religions, often as different from Christianity as such faiths as Islam or Buddhism. Many Christians oversimplify these differences and in a society which glorifies in at least the principles of tolerance, to do otherwise, one may be seen as being too discriminatory or even bigoted.

One of the extreme dangers faced by the Christian Church in the world today is the fact that many people feel inclined towards the Christian ethic but wish to have it without its Christian foundations and doctrines. However, the Church has affirmed that it is not really possible to fulfill the Christian ethic without the firm foundation of Christian belief. In other words, we have said and will continue to say that man cannot work out his own salvation, that his separation from God and his inability to live

the good life are things which he cannot overcome himself. Humanism and heresies of salvation through works are inadequate. For this reason,Unitarians and members of Moral Re-Armament can be classed as Christian heretics if they are in fact attempting to have the ethic without the belief.

(e) Conclusion

Concerned Christians should ensure firstly that they are acquainted with the historic tenets of the Christian Church and secondly, if they are entering into dialogue with heretical groups, they should inform themselves of the beliefs of these groups as well. Tolerance is a two-way street and one is often disillusioned to find that contemporary heretical groups desire tolerance for their position while at the same time, they, by their missionary efforts among members of other churches, indicate their own intolerance. It is fine, and in fact necessary, for us to say that each man has the right to his own convictions. However, in demanding this right for themselves, these groups are not willing to give it to others. Such is always the case when a group decides that they are the only avenue of approach to God.

One danger that the Church must guard against is in reacting so violently that she in fact, adds impetus to heretical movement. In other words, the Church must stand her ground, uphold man's right to choose his own religious affiliation and, at the same time, stem the subtle inroads attempted by heretical groups. What

bothers historic Christendom most is the parasitic tendencies by which heretics assume a quasi-Christian position, which is more difficult to combat because, to the uninformed, these may appear to be fellow-Christians. The person who is a believing and practicing member of some branch of the historic Church must be as willing to stand firm in his convictions as the heretic is to promote his. Ministers of our own United Church of Canada cannot take lightly their Ordination vow, "I am so persuaded, that the Holy Scriptures contain sufficiently all doctrine required for eternal salvation in our Lord Jesus Christ and am resolved out of the said Scriptures to instruct the people committed to my charge and to teach nothing which is not agreeable thereto".

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Anderson, Einar. "Mormonism". Chicago: Moody Press, 1956

Bennion, S.O. "Fundamental Principles of the Gospel". Utah: L.D.S.

Bennion, S.O. "The Religion of the Latter Day Saints".Utah:L.D.S., 1940

Bettinson, H. "Documents of the Christian Church". London: Oxford Press, 1944

Brodie, Fawn M. "No Man Knows My History". New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1963

Burkitt, F.C. "The Church and Gnosis". London: Cambridge, 1932

Carrington, "The Early Christian Church" Vol. I

Davies, Horton. "Christian Deviations". Amsterdam: S.C.M. Press, 1961

DeSoyres, J. "Montanism and the Primitive Church". London: Deighton, Bell and Co., 1878

Ditterich, E.Keith. "Some Distortions of the Christian Faith". Melbourne: Methodist Publishing House.

Duesbery, J.P.Thornton-. "The Open Secret of M.R.A." London: Blandford Press, 1964

"Facts about Christian Science". Boston: First Church of Christ, Scientist, 1947

Grant, R.M. "Gnosticism"New York: Harper and Bros., 1961

Hammond, P. Malcolm. "If my daughter should want to Marry a Mormon". Nashville: Tidings Press.

Hastings, J. (Ed.) "Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics". New York: 1917-27

Hort, F.J.A. "Judaistic Christianity". New York: MacMillan and Co.,1894

Howard, Peter. "Frank Buchman's Secret".London: Heinemann, 1961

Hyde,O. "Journal of Discourses" Vol II. Utah: L.D.S.

Jones, R.M. "The Church's Debt to Heretics". London: James Clarke and Co., 1924

Krumm, J.M. "Modern Heresies". Seabury Press, 1961

L.D.S. "Book of Mormon" Utah: L.D.S., 1950, Copyright 1948

L.D.S. "Doctrine and Covenants". Utah: L.D.S. 1952, Copyright 1949

Lickey, A.E. "Fundamentals of the Everlasting Gospel" Adventist Publication, 1947

Loew, C. "Modern Rivals to the Christian Faith". Philidelphia: Westminster Press, 1956

Mann, W.E. "Sect, Cult and Church in Alberta". Toronto: University Press, 1955

Marty, Martin E. "A Short History of Christianity". New York: Meridian Books Inc., 1959

Mayer, F.E. "Jehovah's Witnesses". Concordia Publishing House, 1954

Nigg, Walter. "The Heretics". Knopf Press, New York

Runciman, Steven. "The Medieval Manichee". New York: Viking Press, 1961

Schnell, W.J. "Thirty Years a Watch Tower Slave". Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1957

Scholefield, H.B. "A Pocket Guide to Unitarianism". Boston: Beacon Press, 1961

Talmage, J.E. "Articles of Faith". Utah: L.D.S. 1952 Copyright 1913

Thorndike-Barnhart Dictionary. Chicago: Scott, Foresman Co., 1952

Trend, W.H.C., "The Donatist Church". Oxford Press, 1952

Walker, W. "A History of the Christian Church". New York: Scribner, 1959

White, Ellen. "The Great Controversy" Boston:

Young, B. "Journal of Discourses" Vol XI. Utah: L.D.S.

Part II Articles and Periodicals

"ERA". Nov. Issue. Utah: 1961

Cheville, R.A. "Mormonism on the Move". Christian Century, Oct 30, 1963

Lindsell, H. "What of Seventh-day Adventism?". Christianity Today, April 14, 1958

Schnell, W.J. "Sects of Russellism". The Converted Jehovah's Witness Expositor Vol VII Issue No. 1, 1964

Shideler, Mary M. "Within Protestantism, Diversity". The Christian Century, March 6, 1963

Smith, W.S. "Victorian Heretics in London". The Christian Century, May 15, 1963

"Theosophist Helena Blavatsky". The Christian Century, Aug. 14, 1963

BIBLIOGRAPHY (continued...)

Tennant, Hal. "New Look at a Turbulent Sect". Maclean's Magazine August 25, 1962

"The Lord's Day in the New Testament". Good News Series No. 13, Southern Publishing Assoc., Nashville.

Part III Reports

Chambers, C.H. "Christian Science". Board of Evangelism and Social Action, The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

Nicholson, C.M. "Pentecostals and Others" Conference on Ecumenical Affairs, Halifax Presbytery: Jan. 15-16, 1965

B29851